BEHIND GRAY WALLS

By P. C. MURPHY

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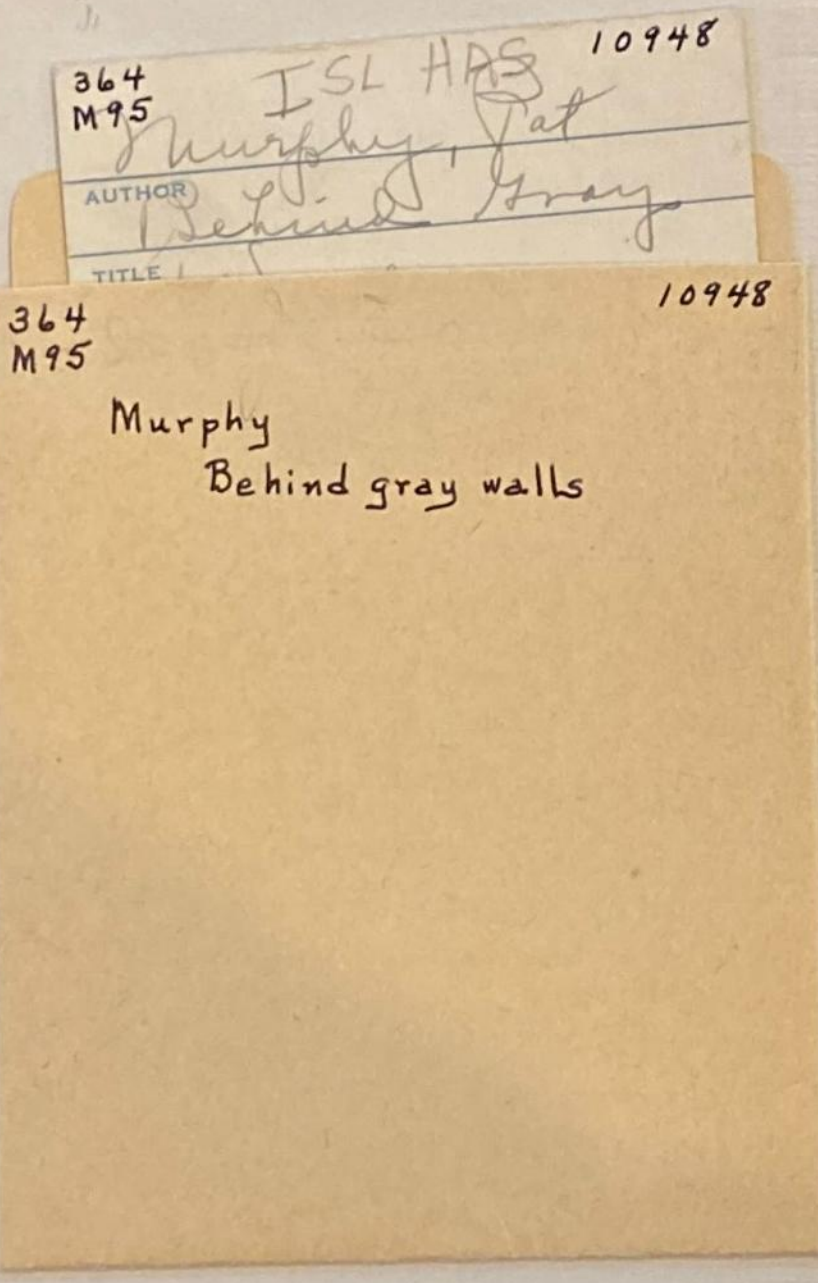

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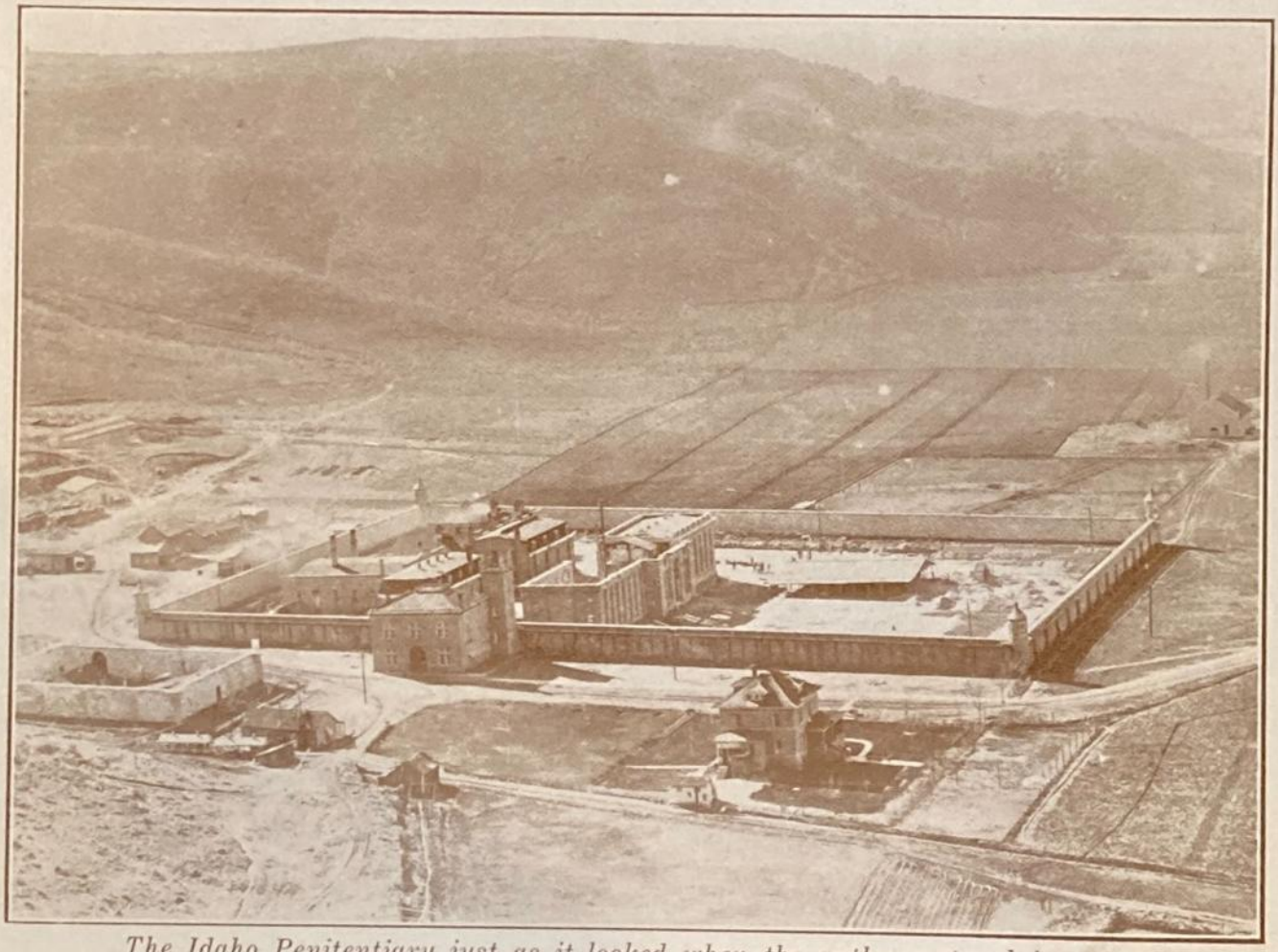

The Idaho Penitentiary just as it looked when the author entered its gates, September, 1915.

BEHIND GRAY WALLS

Southern Idaho
College of Education
Albion, Idaho

BY

PATRICK C. MURPHY

(Life Prisoner in the Idaho State Penitentiary)

AUTHOR OF

"A Soldier's Life in the Tropics,"
"The Dying Burglar," "Dakota Slim,"
"Confessions of a Confidence Man,"
and other short stories.

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BEHIND GRAY WALLS

THE AUTHOR OF THIS VOLUME SERVED AS A UNITED STATES SOLDIER IN THE PHILIPPINES DURING THE INSURRECTION AND, WITH HIS TWELVE YEARS IN THE TOMBS, HE IS WELL PREPARED TO BUILD THE MATERIAL IN THE BOOK BEFORE YOU.

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST EDITION

Some time ago I had a letter from Pat Murphy, the man who has written this book.

I went out to the penitentiary and talked with Murphy. He looked me straight in the eye when he spoke, in his voice there was the sound of sincerity, his bearing showed that he was a man with hope in his heart, an objective in life, and a purpose to go square and clean.

He told me the story of his experience since five years ago. A man without friends and penniless he was sentenced to life behind gray walls.

I did not ask him to tell me anything that happened before the iron doors swung shut behind him. It was none of my business. Who am I that I should part the curtain that time mercifully drops down to separate the past from the present in the life of a man?

Only the hand of God has the right to draw back that screen.

I read his manuscript as it appears in this book.

Mr. James H. Gipson, of The Caxton Printers, Caldwell, Idaho, who is known to be an idealist—counting men of more worth than money—became interested, and without

profit at actual cost has published this book.

What you will find in it I cannot say.

This is what I have found. A man though plunged into the blackest depths of the abyss can, if he will, look up and up and he will find gleaming yet on the mountain top a ray of hope.

And while there is hope in the heart of man there is an excuse for life.

Pat Murphy, convict, sentenced to life imprisonment in the Idaho State Penitentiary has told something in this roughly written book that he himself has proved true in the five years he has spent behind gray stone walls. It is this: The soul of a man can rise above his physical environment.

—Earl Wayland Bowman.

Boise, Idaho
May 25, 1920.

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION TO REVISED EDITION

This volume is the growth from a small book published in 1920, bearing the same title.

During my imprisonment I have read and studied many books on crime, prisons, and prisoners. Some of which were: "The Criminal Law of England," by Stephen; "History of Crime," by Pike; "Prisons in England," by Howard; "Punishments and Crime," by Du Con; "Crime and Causes," by Morison; "The Criminal," by Ellis; "Punishment and Reformation," by Wane.

I have read also a number of books by American authors, some of which were "Crucibles of Crime," "The American Prison System," "My Life Out of Prison," "The Twenty-Fifth Man," and others. I am not writing from knowledge I have derived from books, but from my own personal experience. However, the books mentioned above have assisted me and brought about the impulse to write my own experience.

So, after twelve years behind dead walls, I present this human document to the cold gaze of the critic. This volume does not shine as a literary gem, for my opportunities

in life were not such as to develop literary talent. When a boy 13 years of age I drifted out into the world; therefore, what education I have obtained has been from the hard school of experience.

What I do not know about composition I hope to make up for with the knowledge I have of prison.

I thank you,

Penitentiary, —Patrick C. Murphy.
Boise, Idaho.
September 25, 1927.

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Southern Idaho
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CHAPTER I.

WHEN THE GATES SWUNG SHUT

Early in the gray dawn of a dreary September day in 1915, I arrived, with a companion, on an early morning train, in Boise, the beautiful capital of Idaho. We were met at the depot by a man who conveyed us to a hack drawn up at the curb and to which was hitched a pair of nervous gray horses. We climbed into the rig and the team was swiftly driven through the business section of the city and turned toward the east, out Warm Springs Avenue. My thoughts were quite different from those of most people who land for the first time in the charming city of Boise, for I was in irons; my companion was a heavily armed guard who watched my every move.

For fifteen minutes, perhaps, we drove past stately homes and shaded lawns. Ahead of us, to the right, at some distance a large building loomed before us. At first I thought it was to be our destination, but when we reached it our driver drove straight past—it was the Natatorium. A few hundred yards farther on we came to a stone arched gate; beyond that was an open space—like a farm and against the brown hillside. In the distance, I saw the frowning walls of the Idaho

State Penitentiary; and within those walls I was to be confined for the rest of my natural life.

My eyes searched the premises surrounding the prison for the convict cemetery, where I myself would finally go when the sentence of the law expired. But as I failed to see any tombstones that represented a graveyard I dismissed the subject from my mind and took a deep breath, as one who feels himself sinking under dark waters, wishing to inhale all of God's free air that was possible.

The vehicle stopped before the prison office. The guard rang a bell to summon the turnkey on the early morning watch to open the door from within. The door swung open. No word was spoken. We stepped inside, the door closed behind us; a great key was turned in the lock, and iron bars and stone walls shut me forever in

"The spot where men love not
The land of fear and dread
Of prayers unheard and hope deferred
The tombs of the living dead."

I was conducted into a small room and told to remove my clothing and put on a prison uniform that had evidently been prepared for my arrival. The guard accompanied me inside the walls to a cell and the iron doors clanged behind me.

"Hello, 'fish,'" (a new prisoner)' was the greeting from the cell adjoining the one in

which I was locked. "Are you Murphy?" my neighbor asked.

"Yes," I answered.

"The Judge gave you the 'book' (meaning life term) didn't he?" Through the underground channels he was aware that I was a "lifer" before I entered the prison. He was very inquisitive, but I was in no mood to listen to his sinister queries. All of the ghastly tragedy of life was parading before my mind. The grim and angular bars were terrible reminders of the end; but I was soon relieved when the prison gong sounded for the morning unlock and took my inquisitor away.

Breakfast was served to me in my cell, as all "fish" are kept locked up until their final inspection. Later in the day I was taken to the front office to be Bertillioned—which in the parlance of the prison is to be mugged, weighed, measured, finger prints taken and all scars and marks noted. I was then taken back inside and to the bath house and given a bath, then, to the tailor shop and measured for clothing. The barber shop came next for a hair cut and shave. From there I was taken to the store room before the captain of the yard; where I was given a number and assigned to a cell.

My number was 2338, that indicated that twenty-three hundred and thirty-eight prisoners had been received at the penitentiary

during its sixty years of existence. The captain took me in charge, and across the yard to a different cell house from the one I had been previously in; he showed me a cell to which I was to come when the whistle was sounded for the lock-up at five o'clock in the evening. He then gave me general instructions as to where the dead line was, and not to go to the shops without a guard; how, when and where to go when mealtime came. He then stated that I was to have the liberty of the yard, that is, he said, "out and beyond those buildings and by staying in certain limits you will find about two acres where the prisoners stay in the daytime. It is an enclosure we call the yard."

I thanked him and walked down an alley between two large buildings in the direction the captain had pointed. When I reached the end of the alley, I came in view of about an acre of open space between the walls and where I stood. I paused, and perhaps paled at the sight before me; what a terrible contrast to the beautiful scenery I had seen early that morning on the long drive to the prison.

To the front and to the left, near the hospital, I saw cripples, consumptives, old and decrepit men, aimlessly wandering around like restless animals in captivity. For a moment I forgot my own troubles and pitied the dim shadows of derelicts before me. Then I turned and walked around the

building, out into the other part of the yard in hopes of seeing something better. But it was all the same. For ten minutes, perhaps, I stood alone, viewing the sordid surroundings, then I noticed an old man approaching. He was gray and bent with many years; his face was wrinkled but not unkind.

"Howdy, stranger," he said as he scrutinized me with his steel gray eyes, "how much time did you bring with you?" he asked.

"I've got it all," I said. "Oh, yes, you are Murphy I believe; my name is Fleming. I, too, am doing life." Then he smiled as though it was a joke, and said: "But why worry? Forget it and ride easy, they all get a chance. I'm over seventy years of age and have hopes. Six years ago I came here to be 'topped' (hung). I was in the death cell eighteen months; finally my sentence was commuted to life imprisonment." Just then he pointed to a middle-aged man walking across one end of the yard. "See that fellow going there? He was convicted of a triple murder thirteen years ago and was sentenced to hang; put in two years in the death cell; his case was appealed to the Supreme Court; they turned him down for a new trial; he came within a few hours of the rope; his grave was dug; he had been given his final bath and shave and was all ready to go. He was commuted to life imprisonment; a few years later his sentence was again com-

muted to twenty-five years. He goes out free in a few months after having completed thirteen years' and nine months' solid time, which is a twenty-five year sentence."

Fleming then pulled out his handkerchief, and wiping the sweat from his brow, remarked, "My! but it is terrible hot, let's go to the shade," indicating a flat top shed a few yards away. On the way I noticed the shed referred to was just boards nailed together on top of posts, about seven feet high, with about fifty square feet of shade below. There I saw about two hundred other prisoners, of all ages and shapes with features that were interesting to study. Young men in perfect health, fat men with big bellies, lean men with bullet heads, square heads and bald heads, young boys with weak wills and effeminate gestures, strong men with simple faces, tough mugs and sissies. Men refined and well-mannered, others stupid and ignorant. Some we saw sitting around in groups, some standing or shifting about and others lounging on the ground.

I asked Fleming if there was any employment at the prison for this group of men. "No," he said, "there is no work. In summer months we hang out in the shade of the shed, when it is too hot to mope around the yard, and in cold months we loaf in an old cell house. Just then I noticed a little strip of a boy, perhaps twelve or fourteen years of age.

He was pale and thin, with brown hair and dreamy eyes and modest as a nun. "What is that little fellow doing here," I inquired. Fleming looked sad and replied, "He's got the book too, sent here when he was eleven years old for the murder of his mother. Some say he shot and killed her in a fit of anger; others say the gun was discharged accidentally."

"The law, in Idaho, forbids sending a youth convicted of murder to the reform school and that is why he is here."

We saw standing near the boy, a strong, massive man with broad shoulders and piercing eyes, a picture of health and strength. He, too, was "doing all," having plead guilty to murder in the first degree.

Then I was amazed to see a figure drift by dressed in a black suit slashed with large gray stripes, which gave him the appearance of a human zebra. He was a parole violator, Fleming explained, all of whom were forced to wear stripes for six months after their return.

NOTE—Employment was created for all the inmates in 1922 by Warden Cuddy, who is now dead. The boy "lifer" referred to was given a conditional pardon when he reached the age of eighteen, having served seven years. Old man Fleming was pardoned after serving twelve years. The "lifer" referred to, who plead guilty, was commuted to twenty years. He served eleven years and three months continuous time and went free.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST NIGHT IN THE PENITENTIARY

At the sound of a shrill whistle that echoes against the grim rock walls, I see the men all moving toward the cell house. Five o'clock lockup I am told. I am locked in a cell with a short chunky fellow about twenty-five years old, with light brown hair and blue eyes. Not a bad face and without the appearance of the so-called criminal type. Merely a boy that would like to be tough. "What 'id yu' bring?" he asked (meaning the term of sentence). "I have from now on," I answered. "That's nothing," he sneered, "I'm doing it all on the installment plan. I'm on my third stretch in this stir. When I came here first I was seventeen years old. I always get ditched for the same thing—finding a rope." "How can they send you to the penitentiary for finding a rope?" I inquired. "Easy enough," he said. "You see it's like dis, every time I gets the blamed thing home, I find somebody's horse tied to the end of it."

My companion was a habitual gossiper. His knowledge of the penitentiary was amazing. His talk was fast and low, as though he wished to convey the impression that he was a real bad man. "They call this cell house the strong box," he said, with a sneering grin.

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"Here is where all of the long timers are housed, as well as the short timers, who they know are hard guys." With this remark he spit sideways with a knowing grin at the corner of his mouth. He went on to explain, there were two other cell houses where the less fractious and "soft" guys were kept.

I soon learned that House Number Three was built at the beginning of the prison sixty years ago; that House Number Two was built some twenty-five years ago, and that House Number One, in which I was confined, had just been completed. There were 80 cells, 40 on each side of the cage and four tiers high. We were on the third floor. The first cell on our left was occupied by a pair of burglars. The one just to our right was a foot pad and porch climber. "The fellow just above us was prowling a slum dump when the bulls smoked him up; he is all geayed up and is alone on the top tier." What my companion wished to state was: that the prisoner occupying the cell just above us, was burglarizing a jewelry store and the police had shot him in making the arrest. Hence, he came to the prison crippled, and for that reason was given the privilege of a cell to himself.

It is not my intention to bore the reader with prison slang, but since this story is written true to prison life, it must be colored with some of the slang that is the common

language of all prisons. Therefore, I have merely given you the topics that this young disciple of the underworld discussed so freely on my first night in the penitentiary twelve years ago.

My silence seemingly failed to dam his flow of gossip. His tongue wagged on until he had given me the pedigree of every prisoner within the building and was straying off into the other buildings long before nine o'clock. He expressed in terms of slang, common to the underworld, his past experiences, until I became convinced that he was certainly a perfect, living, breathing, talking prison encyclopedia. At last he fell asleep and I felt free to collect my thoughts and inspect the chilled steel walls of my cell in which I was to spend fourteen hours out of every twenty-four, three hundred and sixty-five times each year, for the rest of my natural life. I found the sides, top, back and floor solid steel. The narrow door in front was made of heavy crossbars without sufficient space between them to push your hand through. The cell was four feet wide and seven feet long. On one side, riveted to the wall, one above the other, were two narrow bunks, in the corner was a small electric light.

It is nine o'clock; I hear the soft footsteps of the guard taking the count. He passes our cell, pauses, peers in at my snor-

ing companion who is stretched out on the lower bunk, and then passes on.

I discovered on my bunk a library catalogue, giving the numbers and names of four thousand books which were available for the use of prisoners. That was an agreeable surprise for me. I could at least read through the years until the end of my life, and books promised to make less dreary those years behind gray walls.

I noticed a card stuck on the wall and on it printed the rules a prisoner should obey. At the bottom of the card in large print were these words: "Any prisoner wilfully breaking these rules will be forced to forfeit part or all of his good time." In other words he would automatically sentence himself to a longer period of time. I thought to myself, "I'm in the mire as far as they can get me, it is up to me to pull myself out. Maybe some day I will get this life sentence cut down to where I can see the end of it and be among those who are fortunate enough to have good time to lose." I may add here that good time for good conduct is a very powerful stimulant for discipline and obedience in prison. Hope is ever beckoning us on —even a "lifer" dreams of a day when things will be different.

CHAPTER III.

TALKS WITH A NOTED CRACKSMAN

A few days after my arrival at the penitentiary, I made the acquaintance of an old safe blower, John, I will call him, whom I met in the yard. He gave me the impression of being very intelligent, one who should be a prosperous business man. His hair was gray; he stood erect; he walked with an elastic step; his eyes were searching and alert, while his voice was low and soft and pleasant to hear. "Let's go to the shed," I suggested. To this he did not answer but selected a seat on a rock near where we were standing and beckoned me to a similar seat beside him.

"Murphy," he said, "you are a new man in this prison and hanging over you is a life sentence. Now there is one thing that I want to put you wise to, that is, do your own time. The less you talk in here the better it will be for you. Many say silence is silver but believe me in one of these places it is golden."

The aged cracksman held a match to his pipe, which had grown cold while we were talking, and continued, "I am just finishing a ten to twenty-five year sentence. I got the top twenty-five years trimmed off, so it leaves me ten years to serve, and with good

time off for excellent conduct I will have just seven years continuous time until I go free. This I will finish in a few months more. This is my third jolt for a box (blowing a safe). I am nearly sixty years old and have spent half my life doing time and I can truly say there's nothing to it. At one time I thought there was, but I have long since reached a different conclusion. They made me (learned of his past record) at this prison through the finger print system before I was here three months. They have all of my past record out in the front office."

The aged cracksman talked freely of his past career, but as to his future he was silent and reserved. "My first sentence was in Sing Sing," he said. "Just before I was released from there, a stool pigeon, whom I had words with, wrote to the P. K.'s, (Pinkerton Detectives) in New York City. He advised them my future plans were to work the New England states. I had hardly left Sing Sing, before the 'dicks' were shadowing me; every town I would light in some fly cop (detective) would make me (identify) before I was there an hour. I would receive an invitation to go down and see the Chief, where I would be asked to explain my presence in their city; so I just dropped out of sight and came to the west coast, where I soon fell for a jug (bank). I pulled a long jolt in a California stir (penitentiary).

"You asked me, Murphy, to go with you to the shed, I will now give you my reasons for declining. The fact is, that shed is shading many stool pigeons whose chief delight is to hear a conversation that they may garble to suit themselves and pass on where it will do the most harm. In mixing in with a crowd I am bound to come in contact with a rat (stool pigeon), who might have a motive to pad up some unintentional remark that I might make, stretch it out and build onto it and thereby create a story that I am going out into the world with other motives in view than those of the best. So I have felt it best to stay clear of the bunch during the last days of my confinement and thereby eliminate any possible story preceding my release."

I may be wrong but the aged cracksman gave me the impression that when he left prison this time, he would bid goodbye to Gray Walls forever. That has been twelve years ago and so far as I can learn he has since gone straight.

CHAPTER IV.

SUNDAY WITHIN WALLS

On the morning of my first Sunday in the penitentiary, I met John, the cracksman, standing in the alley between the two cell houses, looking inquiringly down the driveway toward the front gate.

"What's on your mind, John," I asked.

"I'm watching the gate to see who comes out from town today," he replied.

"What are you expecting, a visitor?" I asked.

"No, the church people. You see we have services in the dining room every Sunday. People from all denominations take turns in coming out to speak or preach and give entertainments. Many faiths are represented: Catholic, Protestant, Mormon, Hebrew, Salvation Army, Sisters of Mercy, Missionaries, Theosophists and others. As a rule they bring good speakers, occasionally a show and often good singers. They receive no pay for this; apparently they come only for the welfare of these fallen men. I like to go and hear them talk for I know they are the kind whose vision goes beyond the surface and sees manhood within the depths. Although, were you to tell the P. K.'s (Pinkerton Detectives) that I enjoy good music and a word

of hope within the chapel, they would laugh at you. Down deep in the heart of all mankind, Murphy, there is some unknown spark that frequently kindles into a flame of faith. I like the sermons and enjoy the voices of good singers. Beautiful music soothes my soul and brings a security of peace not unlike the fragrance of wild roses. It carries me back to memories when I was a child playing in a flower garden, or out in the moonlight on the lawn listening to the rustle of leaves in the boughs of green trees that stood as a background to my mother's garden. I used to wonder who created those beautiful things."

I was surprised to hear such language falling from the lips of John, the criminal, and I looked at him closely to see if it was the same John that I had met before. It was hard to reconcile John, the criminal, with John, the man who loved and respected the wondrous things of nature and the godliness of man.

"Murphy," he said, "all nature proves there is some Supreme Power within the vaults of space, somewhere. It's in the rose, in the beautiful story that nature unfolds, and in every heart; every living human being has the fabric of divinity woven into his being. Many do not realize this, but it is there just the same.

"I am not a religious fanatic, nor have I got what some term the religious bug, as practiced by a few who play religion, trying to create an impression of reformation, thinking it the shortest way to freedom. It must be very discouraging to the welfare workers when they get stung by such hypocritical, depraved characters, some of whom were committed to prison for the most vicious crimes. Their hearts are as black as the coats of midnight. You find them in every prison and every experienced prison official knows that it is a noticeable fact that men committed to prison for sexual depravity profess religion immediately. Right off the bat they make a grandstand play for the front seat in chapel on Sunday and this is one of the things that keep self-respecting prisoners away from chapel."

Just then the front gate opened with a bang. There comes a lone man.

"That's the Protestant minister," said the cracksman. "Good speaker, too."

We entered the dining room and were seated near the center of the building. The minister delivered a very good sermon and after he had closed his talk, he asked if there were any who wished to give testimony in their belief in religion. A bright looking youth was the first to rise. He spoke briefly and to the point.

"That boy," said the cracksman, "is on the square. He was well-raised and came from a good home. He made one misstep and fell."

The next to rise was a man in his fifties. He looked as though he had seen only the darker side of life.

"That's an old burglar," remarked my companion, "he, too, is on the square."

The next to rise was a fellow who appeared to be a prison dandy. His hair was oiled and carefully parted in the middle. Around his neck was a flashy red tie, while a little white fuzzy mustache gave his upper lip a grotesque appearance. He began like a bashful girl. His voice, which was low and squeaky, occasionally rose above a whisper and then dropped into a murmur. No one knew what he was saying. The other men became restless and looked at him in scorn; even the minister gave a look of disgust as though he was anxious to have him stop his unintelligible chatter. I did hear him say he was glad they could not call him a crook.

"That is the notorious character they call Maggie, the peeper, said the cracksman.

Following him were perhaps half a dozen more who spoke briefly and sat down.

"Those were all sincere," said the cracksman.

At last a clumsy two hundred pounder arose from a seat, just in front of and near

the minister. He pushed back the long bench from which he had just arisen as though he was going to deliver an address to a large audience. With his chest expanded and one hand on his receding forehead, he gazed up at the ceiling; then dropping his hand, he turned slowly around, surveying the entire room, as if to see how many had been fortunate and thoughtful enough to come in and hear his eloquence. Everybody was grinning.

He opened up with a roar and his gestures consisted of making all the noise possible by stamping the floor, and pounding the table in front of him with his fist. He yelled and yowled and tramped the floor until it was difficult to tell whether he resembled most a howling dervish or a scare crow on a windy night. He intimated in his closing remarks, how his pride was hurt, at being thrown in contact with a bunch of criminals. Still he knew the good people who came out from town would not class him with the crooks who were overrunning the prison. Above all he was thankful that he had not been sent to the penitentiary for theft.

After the services were over my companion told me the loud fellow was the prison orator; that he was relating the truth when he stated he was not in prison for theft. I afterwards learned that he was here for a vicious assault upon a nine-year-old girl and

was trying to get a pardon by playing religion; insisting that he should be freed because the courts had erred when the complaint stated the girl was only nine years old, when he knew and could prove she was eleven years old.

"That kind are in every penitentiary," said the cracksman. "There was one I knew when I was doing time in the East, who would make the same kind of talk whenever given the opportunity. He would invariably wind up by saying he was thankful he was not in prison for stealing. He also omitted to state that the complaining witness was his own daughter.

"There was another prisoner, who belonged to every denomination that ever reached our chapel. He knew precious little about any of them but made up for it in gall and bunk. If the Methodist should have the day he would run and give the minister the glad hand, telling him how glad he was to see a Methodist minister; that he hadn't seen one since leaving his dear old Methodist parents, the day before leaving for prison. The chances were before the good minister could get away from him he would be seeking his help as a brother Methodist to help him get back to his good old Methodist home.

"The same tactics would be adopted should the Presbyterian, Baptist or any other denomination come out to speak. He played

them all. But he finally got a deserving jar. It happened one Sunday when no one came out from town and a prisoner was holding services in the chapel. In a small room nearby a priest was holding mass and hearing confessions from men of his own faith. After mass was over the goodly priest came in at a side door to make a short talk to those in the main chapel of all faiths. During this brief talk this Christian of all denominations inquired of another inmate what kind of a preacher was he with the black dress on. He was told that the speaker was a Roman Catholic priest. When the priest had finished, he rushed up to him exclaiming how glad he was to see him; that he, the prisoner, had been a Catholic all his life. He thought they should get acquainted.

"The priest looks him over, and says: 'So you are a Catholic, young man?' 'Yes, indeed,' replied the prisoner. 'My grandfather was born in Rome, and how happy I am to say so. You are the first Roman Catholic priest that I have talked to since I left my good old Catholic home. The hearts of my parents are breaking because I am away from them. My father is such a good old dad.'

"The priest did not seem to be impressed. Then the human salamander leaned forward and says, 'the reason I think so much of my father is that he is a priest."

With a smile of tolerance the good priest brushed past, no doubt with the conviction that the courts had erred in sending this man to prison—it should have been the asylum.

"Such things as these keep many prisoners from church, but enlightenment is creeping forth and it is hoped that in the not too distant future those beyond the walls will know just what is standing between them and the hearts of the men in prison."

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Rev. Earl C. Pounds, Prison Chaplain and Parole Officer, also Superintendent of Idaho Society for the Friendless, and for many years active in uplift work, helping many parole prisoners to get onto their feet and into proper employment. Date, September, 1927.

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CHAPTER V.

IN BAD AT THE START

Less than thirty days after I was received at the penitentiary, I was ordered out of the main line of prisoners as it filed out of the dining room from the midday meal. The guard escorted me to my cell and I was instructed to get my blankets, which indicated that I was to be moved. I was then conducted downstairs from my former cell, to the "hard-boiled" row, and locked in a cell. In a few moments in came six more, most of them, like myself, pulling the stretch which has no end.

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The "hard-boiled" is a row of ten cells on the west side and lower floor of House Number One. The first, or number 1, is the death cell, and was occupied at that time by Charley George, who had been sentenced a few months before to be hung. His case had been appealed to the Supreme Court, but he was later denied and the death sentence ordered carried out. However, before his final walk to the scaffold his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

Charley was a good prisoner, a hard worker, obeying all the rules and trying to do the square thing by all. Eventually he was made a "trusty" and never violated the

trust placed in him. In the fall of 1926, he was rewarded with a reprieve. He made good while out on reprieve and in July 1927, was given a pardon. He served nearly eleven years' time from the date he was commuted to life imprisonment and released from the death cell, until he was reprieved.

But, back to the "hard-boiled" row. Cell Number 1, as I have stated was the death cell, the other nine cells were for men who had been ordered or sentenced to solitary confinement. Cell Number 2 was occupied by a Mexican, Number 3 by a mulatto; the other seven cells were occupied by our bunch who were practically all "lifers" and only one man to a cell.

The Mexican in Cell Number 2 had been in solitary for five months for cutting a fellow prisoner with a knife, the mulatto, in cell Number 3, was also a knife man, as I will bring out later.

The following morning at 9 o'clock, one by one, all of the doors except Numbers 1 and 3, were opened and we seven and the Mexican stepped out into the corridor, which is enclosed at the end with iron bars. Just outside of the bars, the guard, who is on the death watch, remains continuously. He has charge of the opening and closing of all of the doors on that row, which are governed by a lever enclosed in a box with a combination lock.

One-half hour we are permitted to walk up and down the narrow corridor for exercise, at the expiration of this thirty minutes we are returned to our cells and locked in. The death cell is then opened and Charley comes out for a half hour in the allotted space. After Charley is returned to his cell, Number 3 is opened and a tall muscular mulatto paces up and down the corridor. I am told that the man waiting for the rope is never permitted to mix with the other prisoners, that the mulatto is a dangerous man with a knife. He had been confined in the "hard boil" for more than two years and was never allowed to mix with any of the men. Once each week, three guards would conduct the mulatto to the bath house. He was considered not only dangerous but vicious. His present confinement in the "hard boil" was the result of his cutting up an eighteen-year-old boy so badly that it was necessary to take 80 stitches in closing the gashes on his body and it was only a miracle that he lived.

The boy and mulatto had been chummy around the prison yard but had words over some trivial affair. The mulatto drew a long knife that he had stolen from one of the shops and begun slashing at the boy, who was making an effort to escape. In running from the mulatto he was slashed many times across the shoulders. Other prisoners rushed the mulatto and laid him low with a baseball

bat, taking the knife away from him. It was only the timely arrival of several guards that saved the mulatto from two hundred infuriated prisoners. The mulatto was taken to the "hard boil" and the boy to the hospital, where the latter remained for several months. He eventually got well, but was a much disfigured and wiser boy.

Up to this time I did not know why I had been placed in solitary confinement, but I was certain that some stool pigeon had "framed" me. The first thing that flashed into my mind was that some of the petty offenders, who were in jail when I was sentenced, had, after my departure for the penitentiary, told a deputy sheriff that it was my intention to try and "beat the dump" (escape), and that the deputy sheriff in trying to assume an important role had conveyed the information to the prison authorities, the petty offender himself expecting to get his time cut down a few days by concocting the lie. Of course the deputy sheriff would report such things to the penitentiary, and on the strength of this I would be confined in solitary, without even getting a hearing before the warden. But I could not understand why the other men were there also.

A few days later, I learned through the sub rosa channels, that we had been ordered to solitary through fear of a break, as it had been reported a "bunch" were going to make

a break and go over the walls. It seems there was a prison break brewing before I was received at the prison. It was being worked up and urged on by a clever rat (stool pigeon) who was doing a one- to ten-year jolt. There were twenty or more whom he was trying to get in on the break, but only seven long timers were picked out and locked up. This copper-hearted rat had quietly drifted among these men and told them how sorry he was for them, and, as he was not suspected, he was going to escape and could be of great help to the long timers; that he was sure he could help them all escape. He claimed to be acquainted with the surrounding country and had friends in distant hills who would insure their protection.

He pictured in a dime novel way how they could rush a tower guard, while others rushed the dining room for benches which they could place against the wall and run right over to liberty, like a bunch of sheep out of a corral. Of course, he knew they would be running right into the jaws of death, even if they got that far; but that made no difference to him, he wanted to work the matter up to a boiling point. Of course, I knew nothing of this, being a stranger as well as a new arrival it wasn't possible they would take me into their confidence. I am certain that I had never spoken to this dime novel fiend.

It was his custom to interview the warden and tell him of the plans of the prisoners who had selected him for their leader; he would tell the warden the men were to meet at a certain place in the yard to talk matters over. Then he would go to his victims in the yard and tell them to meet him at the place he had designated to the warden, so they could figure things out. As a precaution, the warden posted the guards on the walls to be on the lookout, and when these secret meetings were held, they, of course, would report the matter to the warden. Apparently, the statement of the stool pigeon had been corroborated. In this particular case, I believe he even went so far in his imagination, as to manufacture some "dummy" guns, which were to be smuggled in. He was double crossing the prisoners and double crossing the warden.

I could never understand why he implicated me, unless he had taken a dislike to my looks or thought that I was ignorant and would make a gullible victim for his dirty work. At least I was a "fish," doing it all, and since the warden would not know anything to the contrary he might as well include me in his report and probably convince the warden that I was in on the plot. I learned afterwards that this "rat" left no stone unturned in his endeavor to picture me as a dangerous man who should not be

permitted the use and privilege of the yard.

The warden wished to be on the square, but he also wanted to be on the safe side, hence I was locked up in solitary confinement. When he ordered me locked up, he believed he was right. He was to be away for a few days and from the reports that had come to him I suppose he felt justified and again he did not wish to take any chances. Only a few months previously there had been a break in a similar way, in which three were successful in scaling the walls, one was killed and two others were shot down and crippled for life.

It looked very dark for me. I was just starting in on a life sentence and was getting in bad with the officials, through no fault of my own. My heart was filled with hell and hate to think that it was a fellow prisoner who had lied to get me into solitary confinement in trying to get some petty consideration from a few of the guards and perhaps the confidence of the warden.

In the loneliness of that cell, with all the world seemingly against me, without even the sympathy of "cons" like myself, who were shut out from everything worthwhile in life, was born a feeling of resentment against the whole scheme of life. My heart was teeming with hate, my soul was seared with revenge and the perspiration of despair that trickled from my temples would have

poisoned a rattlesnake. But somehow I mastered the feeling of revenge and a beautiful calm of stubborn resistance settled over me.

Although I was in the mire as deep as a man could get, alone in the world, reviled and wrecked for all time to come, with life imprisonment, surrounded by a few such rats, I made up my mind to rise up in a creditable manner above such things as the rat who was the cause of my solitary confinement.

After we had been in the "hard boil" for thirty days and the truth had been sifted from the lies, three of us were turned out—as the warden explained we got a bum rap (wrongfully accused.)

I was again given the privilege of the yard. I thought then—and I am of the same opinion still—that the warden would not wilfully persecute a prisoner, and that he would discharge any guard whom he believed to be doing so.

During the many years of my confinement, I have known of very few officials who abused the power they held over prisoners. There have been a few isolated cases, but they have not lasted long; for such a man is a coward at heart, dull intellectually, and soon found out. If they are successful in "framing" a few prisoners without being found out, they will then start on their fellow guards, or perhaps try to discredit some of

their superiors, with the erroneous hope of getting their jobs. On the rare occasions when this has happened they were immediately discharged.

I know of only one case where a guard was overburdened with hate. I believe that he not only hated prisoners, but every human being, including himself. His mental and physical make-up were out of order. His body was entirely too large, his head too small, his neck too short, and his brain was warped. Perhaps he could not help this hate, but he made no effort to temper his hate with justice. I can only believe that he was a throw-back to the primitive world, a reincarnation from the dark ages. The other guards despised him; the prisoners, almost to a man hated him; during his stay within the prison system the very atmosphere was charged with distrust, disloyalty, intrigue and hate.

It is a well-known fact that hate begets hate, that love and kindness alloyed with justice begets loyalty and a sense of fair dealing in all walks of life. I know this man must have suffered, for you cannot hate without creating a hate toward yourself; neither can you have kind and considerate thoughts without bringing forth similar thoughts from those around you. There is a universal law that fills the inner spaces of all the universe that is ever proving the truth of this logic.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SOLACE OF LABOR

About two years after I was received at the penitentiary, I was given the job of head janitor in Cell House Number One, which I held nearly four years.

In front and around the buildings was nothing but rocks and gravel with the appearance of utter desolation. I was given permission to remove the rocks and gravel and cover the ground near the buildings with a good rich soil, where I sodded a lawn and seeded flower beds. It was not long until the grass was green and the flowers began to bloom; it looked very pretty and was quite a contrast to the remainder of the prison which was bleak and bare with granite boulders scattered around as a reminder as to how the four rock walls were built that shut everything out except a little sky overhead. The blooming of the flowers was like bringing a bit of God's out-of-doors inside; where eyes otherwise could not see. I could not forget the beautiful wild meadows, the green hills and whispering valleys beyond these gray walls, and I am sure others felt the same influence.

During my time as janitor I witnessed two very unpleasant and repulsive deeds by

Flower Garden and Cell House

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other prisoners. The first happened on the "hard boiled" row, which at that time was filled with thirty men, the second tier being also used for the "hard boiled," with two men in many of the cells. Only five of this thirty were in the "hard boiled" for punishment for infractions of the rules of the institution, the other twenty-five being committed to prison for criminal syndicalism.

The United States was then at war and in this place the same as in all other prisons isolated men committed for this offense—not as an extra punishment, but to prevent agitation among the other men. However, they were given more privileges than the five who were in solitary as a punishment for breaking the rules. They were permitted the privilege of the corridor eight hours during the daytime, instead of thirty minutes which was customary for the "hard boil," the other five were herded along with the twenty-five "wobblies."

One of the "hard boiled" whose name was B, had a fuss with one of the guards and thereby forfeited his privilege of the corridor. When the other men were let out in the morning, B's cell would be relocked with him in it.

One of the "hard boiled" was a mulatto, whom I spoke of in a previous chapter. A year before he had been released from the "hard boiled" and given the liberty of the

yard. He soon made friends and became chummy with a little Indian boy, who was a new arrival at the prison. The Indian received a check twice a month from the Indian Agency and the mulatto helped him spend it. He lived high for a little while on the Indian's money, and not being able to spend it fast enough began to gamble it off on the domino games. The Indian objected to this and the mulatto beat him up and for this he was returned to the "hard boiled." As the mulatto had used no knife or dangerous weapon, he was permitted in the corridor during the daytime with the "wobblies" and other "hard boiled."

One day in the early fall, watermelons were being served to the "hard boiled" row, with one of the "wobblies" dividing the melons. The mulatto had been quite chummy with B while in the "hard boiled" so he was given B's share to take to him. Instead of doing this the mulatto ate his own melon and then devoured B's. There followed some ugly words, with the mulatto stating if B didn't like it, he knew what to do, the first time the guard opened B's cell. B advised him that the first time his door was opened he would wipe up the floor with a slimy copper-colored snake. Nothing further was said.

At four o'clock the cell house guard threw B's cell door open as usual, in order to set the lever so that he might lock all of the doors

at one time. Immediately the "hard boiled" was thrown into a riot. I was seated near the emergency button about ten steps from F. E., the guard. The first I knew anything was wrong, F. E. rushed over to where I was with a surprised look on his face and pressed the emergency button, exclaiming, "The mulatto has killed him!" The button he pressed rang a riot bell in the front office, which meant an immediate call for all available guards.

I reached the "hard boiled" just in time to see the mulatto getting a manhandling from the angry "wobblies." B was reeling and all covered with blood. He staggered to the door of his cell and fell on the floor inside.

One of the "wobblies" brought a large, wicked-looking knife, which they had taken from the mulatto, handing it through the bars to F. E., the guard.

It appeared that when B's door was opened he made for the mulatto. The mulatto drew a knife secreted in his clothing the blade of which he plunged at B's heart. B knocked the knife to one side and was cut across the breast. Then the mulatto slashed him across the face and head, and stabbed him in the stomach.

The deputy warden arrived, followed by some guards. B was taken to the hospital, the doctor summoned, and his wounds sewed

up. He eventually got well but was badly scarred for life. The mulatto was removed from the "hard boil" to Cell 70 on the top tier of Cell House Number One, with orders that his cell was never to be opened. The only ones to visit his cell were two guards who carried food to him.

He was either insane, or feigned insanity, for he was sent to Blackfoot a few months thereafter, where he remained only three days, escaping. He was next heard from in the penitentiary of an adjoining state, serving time for slashing someone else.

But back to the evening of the mulatto's assault. Many rumors were going the channels as to how the mulatto secured the knife. F. E., the guard, was accused of being responsible for the affray. It was intimated that he purposely opened B's cell, knowing the mulatto would cut him up. Others claimed they had seen the mulatto and F. E. whispering between the bars just prior to the four o'clock lock-up—one even went so far as to definitely state he had seen the guard slip the knife to the mulatto. The prisoners, however, knew this to be a lie. This super liar had been trying to get familiar with this particular guard by doing some petty "snitching" (tattling) on his fellow inmates in the "hard boil." F. E. had advised the stool pigeon that he was not interested in his tales and that he would be much better

off by doing his own time and keeping his mouth shut.

Naturally, this kind of a "rat" would grab at the opportunity to lie on F. E. to his superiors as he had tried to lie to F. E. on his fellow prisoners. Nevertheless, F. E. lost his job and was discharged from the prison system.

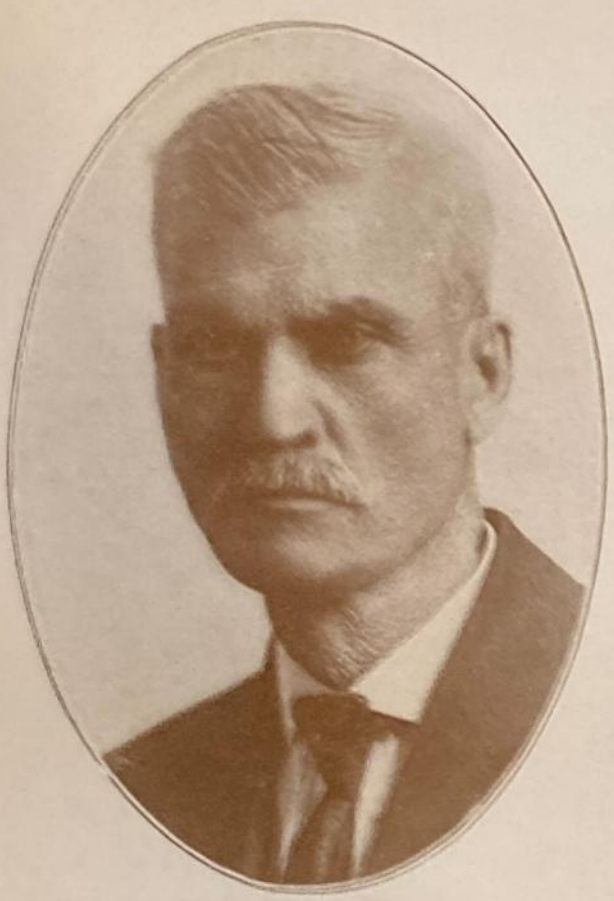
After all the rumors had been analyzed and the truth sifted from the lies, there was little doubt but what F. E. was sure the two men would mix when B's cell was opened. He purposely forgot the quarrel between the two and followed his usual custom of opening B's door, before locking up the others for the night. He knew both men were strong, husky bullies, inclined to be overbearing.

F. E. had a sense of humor and where everything was fair and equal enjoyed seeing a good fist fight. He felt sure that if one of them was getting the worst of the fight and was suffering too much punishment the "wobblies" would stop it. But I feel confident that had he suspected either of the men having a knife he would under no circumstances have let them get together.

In such cases as this, where there is any excitement or anything unusual happens in prison, there immediately follows all kinds of rumors and counter rumors, magnified and exaggerated. It developed some days

later that a Mexican who was employed in the "root house" (where vegetables are prepared), and who had access to knives, had stolen a knife and smuggled it to the mulatto.

Another sad affair, which happened while I was janitor, was that of a seventeen-year-old boy, recently received at the penitentiary, with a life sentence. He was placed in the cell house to help me with the janitor work. He was bright and well-mannered, but timid and retiring. He soon began doing what prisoners call "hard time," that is, brooding and worrying over his sentence. He became dejected and melancholy. One morning in particular, he was silent and blue—much more so than usual. He would hardly speak. After the morning work had been completed, he quickly left the cell house and walked across a portion of the yard into the prison barber shop. He walked straight up to a shelf, picked up a razor, drew it across his throat and staggered out of the door, where he fell. I, and a few more, were on the scene in a few moments. We picked up his limp form from a large pool of blood. The doctor was summoned, but too late. The jugular had been cut. The boy "lifer" had done it all. His spirit had slipped away to stand before the bar of the all-wise Holy Judge.



Mr. Lester, Captain of the Yard at the Idaho Penitentiary, having worked at this prison from time to time for over thirty years. He was for some years Deputy Warden of Deer Lodge Penitentiary in Montana. He is humane, and has given much encouragement to the author, in the growing of flowers. Date, September, 1927.

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CHAPTER VII.

BOSTON ED.

During the winter of 1918 and 1919 when the "flu" swung the grim reaper of death throughout the land we were also included. The hospital and half of the cells were filled with sick. All those able to be up were detailed to wait on the sick, many of whom died. I, also, contracted the disease and lay sick in my cell for more than a week. My two neighbors in the adjoining cells both died.

After the epidemic was over and the cell house was being freed of all the sick, there was one old man who we did not think would get well. He had been very ill. I, alone, waited on him and did my best to pull him through. I sent out and bought various little things that he wanted and through constant nursing eventually got him out of bed; I asked the cell house guard, who was very kind, to let the old man spend the days in the corridor of House Number One with me, and thereby avoid the cold winter weather out in the yard. The guard consented, for he, too, liked the old man and felt sorry for him. My kindness won the old man's friendship, and during the long winter months he unraveled a story of a strange and checkered

career of a half-century spent either on the edge or in the midst of the underworld, where he was known to the police and his associates as Boston Ed. It was the story of a wanderer upon the face of the earth, with no home, few friends and no relatives. I shall not try to tell the story in the fashion of fiction but merely set down the facts as told me by an old man who began a life of crime at the age of seventeen and who was then tottering on the edge of the Great Beyond. Without comment I relate the story to my readers:

"I was born in Boston seventy years ago and left an orphan at the age of three. An uncle, who was in those days fairly well-to-do, took charge of me on the death of my parents. He was much interested in my welfare and sent me to school where I graduated from the high school at the age of seventeen.

"I had the wanderlust and wanted to see the world. I told my uncle that I wanted to visit an aunt, who was then living in Australia. He gave me $1000.00, that was left from my father's estate. I bade him a rather sad goodbye and took a train for New York City, where I expected to embark for Australia.

"When I reached New York, I was a very lonesome and timid boy and was very glad to meet another boy, who convinced me that he was wise to the ways of the world and who assured me that I would do well by go-

ing with him to Philadelphia, before going to Australia. I went with him to Philadelphia, where I soon fell in bad company and got to gambling. It did not take long to lose all the money I had and become destitute.

"I then fell in with an amateur burglar. For a few weeks we were successful in evading the police only to have them raid our room and "pinch" us with the goods. When I was taken to the police station, I gave an assumed name, for I was afraid my uncle would find out that I was in trouble. I took all the blame and plead guilty. They gave me a year in prison. My new found pal, whose home was in Philadelphia, and whose people probably had some influence was released.

"After my year was completed I made my way to Baltimore, where I met a noted "dip" (pickpocket), who suggested that I become his pal and that he would wise me up to the game.

"We left for a state fair in North Carolina; my new pal, the "dip," coaching me in the part that I was to play. We worked the Carolina fair and then went to Jacksonville, Florida, for a similar occasion. My experience was very limited and I was soon "ranked" (detected) by the "bulls." My pal got the "poke" (pocket book) and got away. I was given three months on the chain gang and sent to a stockade out in the country.

I was placed in stripes and forced at hard labor from daylight until dark.

"My pal deserted me and I begun to realize that he was only carrying me along for the "fall guy" in case we got a "rank." I would get "pinched" and he would get away. I came to the conclusion that if I was going to be crooked I had better watch the other crooks as well as the police.

"When my time on the chain gang was finished I went to Atlanta, determined to play a lone hand in my newly learned "art." I got "nabbed" (arrested) making a "dip" and served a year in the Georgia coal mines.

"When I was released I felt that I could not beat the "game" and was determined to go straight. I went to Mexico City, and got a job and went to work. I was getting along fine until one day I was going along the street where I met a half drunken Mexican army officer. He deliberately shoved me off the sidewalk and drew his sword to strike me. I picked up a rock and batted him on the side of the head. He was taken to the hospital for a few days and got well. I was sent to the penitentiary at Mexico City for three years.

"After finishing my sentence in Mexico, I came back to the States and went to "prowling" (burglary). I fell next in Ohio, for ten years. During that time I made up my mind again to go clean. I next went to Alaska,

where I doubled out with an old miner, who had spent his life wandering over the gold fields of the globe. After many hardships and weary months of toil, we made the find. I sold my share for $200,000. I immediately went to Boston to see my uncle, who I found had long since been dead. I then went to Chicago and went into business. I did reasonably well for a time, but my business experience did not qualify me to handle my own money successfully and through various transactions I lost most of it. I gathered up what was left and went to Australia to see the aunt, whom I had started to see from Boston, many years before. After many days of inquiry in Australia, I learned that she was dead.

"In Sidney, I mixed up with a bunch of confidence men and soon learned all of the tricks of this game. I next went to Melbourne and it was while there I was "pinched." I had some money and employed a famous "mouth piece" (lawyer). He secured my acquittal. I next went to France and from there to England, where in London, I posed as an American capitalist for a few months.

"I returned to the States and across the continent to San Francisco. In Frisco, I met up with two other confidence men, and we began working the West together. We made

a number of cities without the "dicks" being wise to our graft.

"It was at this time that I first heard of the noted John T. Glynn, who is chief of the Glynn Detective Agency. I wanted to make a certain state fair, but my companions advised against such a move, stating that the chief of police had sent to Leavenworth, Kansas, for Glynn and his operators to be on hand during the fair. Glynn was feared on account of his ability and respected for his honor by every well-known "con man" and "dip" in the country. He had seen them all, or their picture and had the eye of a camera. But since I had changed considerably since they had "mugged" me for lifting the leather (purse), and the only time that I had been "ranked" for a bunco game, was in Australia, where my picture had not been taken and as "dips" and "con men" are about the only class of crooks that play the fairs, I did not think that Glynn could "make" (recognize) me.

"I decided to leave my two companions and go alone. My first morning at the fair, a fellow came up to me and shook hands as though he had been looking for me. I thought at first that he was another "grifter" (confidence man.) Thinks I, to myself, 'I will take this fellow in and we will work the fair together.' So I begun to feel him out. He immediately stopped my smooth line of

chatter, with the raise of his hand and flashing his star, informed me that he was Glynn. That it was not only his duty to get the "grifters" after they had pulled the job, but to head them off before the trick was pulled. He went on to state that he "made" me before I opened my mouth; that he knew my business at the fair; that he would go with me as a pal for the remainder of the day and that we would see the sights of the fair, but with the coming of night I must take a train out of the city.

"I was with him all of the afternoon and a finer fellow you never met. He did not run me out of the city; he shamed me out. I left that night as I had promised to do. I could not possibly pull anything on him after the way he had treated me.

"I've heard it said that old Al Pinkerton could tell a crook from a man with good intentions as soon as he saw him. I believe Glynn can go him one better—he can hear a crook thinking three blocks away.

"In spite of all the crooks he has caught and sent to prison, there is no man more willing to help the fellow back to reformation, to get on his feet and make good and forget the stain of the past. He advocates everywhere he goes to give the ex-convict a chance. He points out that a man who has served a term in prison is just as good or better than many men who have committed the same crimes

but escaped punishment and the stigma of being an ex-convict.

"Eventually I came to Idaho, and got "ditched" (convicted) for "hanging paper" (forgery). My time will be up in the early spring, this will be the last time that I will see the iron gates, for I haven't long to live.

"Murphy, there is nothing to this crooked life. I've tried all the crooked games. I would have been much better off had I remained in dear old Boston and kept my hands free of all wrong doings. I have mixed with all classes, from high grade crook to common thief. I have mixed with the four hundred as well as the toughest dins in the great cities. I have mixed in every class of society. I've gambled with the knights of Wall Street, dined with the millionaires of Baltimore and danced with some of the royal bloods of Europe. I've been through many hardships and suffered much. For fifty-three years I have been in and out of prison. I have traveled the world and seen life in all its varied colors unfold before me. I am now walking in a dark valley and slowly approaching the grave from which there is no retreat, all the hope that I have for the future is that I may live to die beyond prison walls.

"There is one creed that I have always lived up to: there dwells not one in all this world who can truthfully say that Boston Ed ever betrayed a confidence or went back on

a friend. Whatever wrongs I have done in the past, I have paid for with many long years of ceaseless toil. I have often taken the "fall" for a companion that he might go free; as a traitor to a friend or pal, my soul will ever live untarnished, long after my bones are bleached in death."

CHAPTER VIII.

DEVELOPING A FLOWER GARDEN

In 1921, I was relieved of the janitor work in Cell House Number One, and placed in charge of a small machine shop, where I have remained continuously since. The shop is situated in the extreme northwest corner of the prison and separated from the main prison yard by a stone wall on the north and east side, with Cell House Number 2, on the west side and the dining room and library on the south side. There is a paved walk leading from the entrance of the dining room and east of Cell House Number 2, into the small square where the machine shop stands in the center.

In this small square, which comprises approximately a quarter of an acre, I added several tons of good soil and fertilizer, including a thousand pounds of bone meal and soon developed it into a beautiful flower garden, which consists of many varieties of roses, including the American Beauty, also phlox, asters, zinnias, gladioli, geraniums, coxcombs, pansies, cannas, etc., etc.

This corner of the prison yard is also reserved for the scaffold where executions are carried out when capital punishment is demanded, there having been two men execut-

ed here during my time in prison—one in December 1924 and the other in July 1926.

During my twelve years' imprisonment, I have seen perhaps, twenty "lifers" or at least men who were once "lifers" go free. Five of these were men who had been sent to prison under the death sentence and were commuted to life imprisonment and later commuted to a term of years or pardoned.

The longest term served by any of these was sixteen years and three months, the next longest being fifteen years and some months. The shortest sentence served by any of these "lifers" was one year, while another was released in two years and a few months. The remainder of the "lifers" served sentences of from five to fourteen years continuous time, the "lifer" who served sixteen years and three months would no doubt have been released earlier, but during his last year, while working as a "trusty" outside of the wall, he donned the suit of a guard and tried to make his escape over the hill, he was caught and returned to the prison and placed in solitary confinement for a few weeks and finished his sixteen years and three months inside of the walls.

The "lifer" who was released in a little more than a year, was granted a new trial by the Supreme Court. He was acquitted on his second trial and thereby went free.

When speaking of long terms served in this institution, I cannot resist mentioning the longest timer of all; he first came to the prison some thirty years ago. Twice he has left, determined never to return; but it wasn't long before he was back. He, too, loves and appreciates beautiful flowers and it is through his aid and consideration that the flower garden was successful. He is gray, but not old. Some call him Uncle Dan, others just Dan. He is none other than Daniel W. Ackley, our present deputy warden, who went to work as a guard some thirty years ago at this prison.

During his time he has served in every capacity from guard to warden, serving at one time seven months as warden. For twenty years he has held the position as deputy warden. He knows prisons and he knows men. But what appeals to me most of all, he knows flowers.

Flowers, music, kindness and consideration are all characteristic of the other. It is through beautiful flowers that the love of God enters into the human soul and steals away the bitterness of life. There are flowers with colors rich in art, flushed with nature that speak more eloquent than any language. They murmur beautiful music of strange birds singing the songs of unknown shores. Animals and ape-like men, live in their own senses and do not see the beauty

of the rose. It is the man who loves the varied colors and blending of the shades of the American Beauty, that breathes in a higher realm. The greater the degree of animal characteristics in mankind, the less variety of colors affect him; there are a few who do not know more than three basic colors. To a man who is a butcher with the mind of a swine, the color of red or blue is beautiful. To the soul of the refined nothing is rich in colors save the sensitive blending of opposing shades in unison.

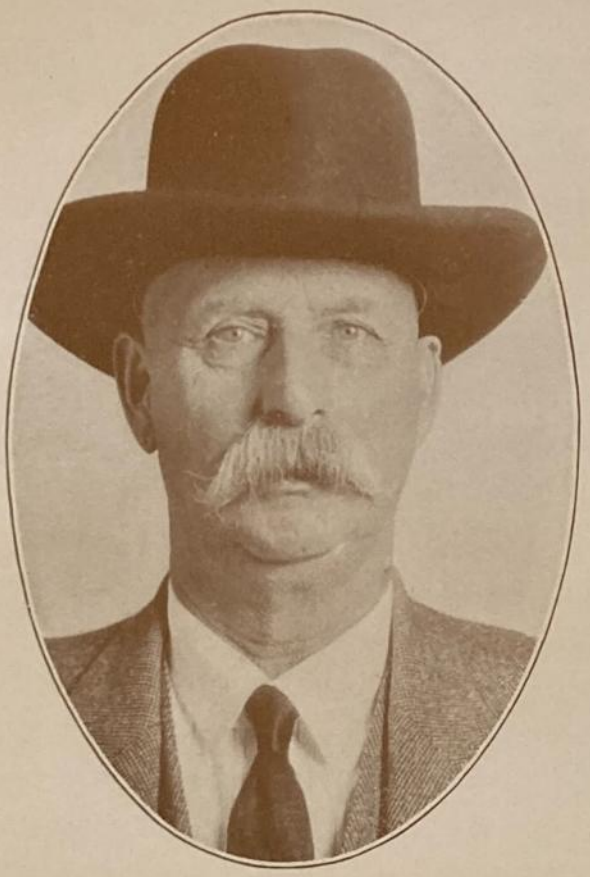
Professor Shaftesbury, the psychologist, was right when he said: "If I wished to pick out men who lived and breathed the spirit of God, I would select them from those who are with me in a group of others at the coming of twilight in the summer skies following the descent of the glorious ball of fire amid a bed of clouds."

Many years ago, while passing a hotel one evening, I saw a dozen or more young men lounging in the piazza, when a wonderful scene was transpiring in the sky. They saw nothing of the glories of God's paintings in the ever-changing colors in the clouds and the vapors there. There were others, however, who saw all that was being enacted before the footstool of the Divine. Those whose ideas were shallow could see nothing in those myriad colors. Doubtless had their attention been directed to such a beautiful

sunset they would have shown little interest in its beauty. Though they were well dressed and perhaps versed in the social ways of the world, everything pointed to a flippant mind and factitious conversation.

But those who saw God in the heavens and watched the wavering streams of light gleaming through the clouds and noted the ever-shifting hand of the painter, sending his colors here and there to adorn the vapor and make them breathe with beauty felt that the sea was enveloping the world and out of it a new city was to be born and bring back the knights of heaven. A man rich in mind, could feel and appreciate the charms of nature folding over the soul of all. Such beauty could not be seen by the swine brain who could not appreciate music and flowers and harmonies of colors in tune with the rainbows. Such beauty would mean nothing more to this type of mind, than the streaking of a slice of ham. While the rose, the flower of all colors, sweet and in soft shading effects, is the voice of God speaking to all humanity. It is the kindness of heaven speaking to the heart of man and woman and the souls of little children.

"Condemn not the flower or vine as they smile and cling
For as they lean and grow they sing
From the music within.
The God of the flower and vine
And the God of man's Divine
Is the same, there is only one."



The longest timer of them all. Daniel W. Ackley, Deputy Warden at the Idaho Penitentiary, having been at the prison for thirty odd years. Date, September, 1927.

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CHAPTER IX.

A MODERN SHERLOCK HOLMES

One day while strolling down the main prison yard, I noticed that a "fish" (new prisoner) was following me as though he was trying to identify me. At first I thought perhaps that he might have seen me in some other part of the world, or just another case of mistaken identity wherein he thought he knew me. I stopped by the side of a building and in a nonchalant way gave him a glance, but could not recall ever having seen him before.

The "fish" came up very close and without speaking circled around me two or three times sizing me up from head to foot, suddenly taking a note book from his pocket, and making some notations therein. I moved a few steps down the building and the "fish" did likewise, slipping up very close behind me. I did not like his actions and came to the conclusion that he was either a "nut" (insane) or had me confused with someone else. He was perhaps twenty years old with light hair and blue eyes and apparently was intelligent, therefore his strange behavior aroused my curiosity.

The following evening, while seated near the hospital, with several other prisoners,

this strange chap singled me out and came over and stood very near me, going through antics as on the day before. After sizing me up for several minutes he pulled what appeared to be a small magnifying glass from his pocket and eased up behind me as though he was looking for some scar or mark. Of course, he did not suspect that I was aware of his actions and as I did not pay him the least attention, he became very bold and went so far as to take a small carpenter's rule, which he had been using during the day and measured the diameter of my ear, as though he was taking my Bertillion.

I was a little angry, but did not speak to him, merely moving off in another direction, calling the attention of other prisoners to his strange actions. I soon learned that I was not the only one he had been following around.

A day or so later we received a big Irishman from one of the eastern counties; as soon as he had been dressed into the prison and given the privilege of the yard, the "nut" (as we now called him) made a bee line for this new arrival, who looked rather like a hard character. He circled around him two or three times and came up so close that the Irishman gave him a vicious snarling look. The "nut" did not seem to realize the Irishman was in a bad mood, but walked straight up to him and began examining his head.

Within less time that it takes to set it down the Irishman had given him a good thrashing.

It was not until the following day that I learned the cause of his strange actions. With a black eye, he came up to where myself and another inmate were talking, and gave us the following story: "I graduated from high school and decided that I would become a detective. I have a cousin on the police force down in San Francisco. I wrote him of my intentions and he sent me a magazine filled with the descriptions of criminals wanted, for whom there were liberal rewards. I bought me several detective books and sent to Chicago for some disguises. I ordered a pair of hand cuffs and a star from St. Louis. When my friends learned of this around home they nicknamed me 'Sherlock Holmes.'

"I went to Utah, looking for crooks. I found one out in the railway yards and immediately took him to the sheriff and asked him to lock him up so as I could get the reward, for I had a picture in one of my magazines showing he was wanted in Montana and there was $5000.00 reward. But the sheriff got sore and locked me up for impersonating an officer. They held me for three days and told me to get out of town, but I am sure they stole that crook from me and collected the reward themselves.

"I got a rotten deal twice in Colorado and once in Wyoming, where I made a good catch. But the officers would only lock me up and collect the reward. So I came to Idaho and borrowed a car to get over the country and they sent me here.

"That fellow that beat me up yesterday is a bad crook, otherwise he would not have beat me up. If he wasn't a crook, then why did he object to my looking at his head?

"When I came here I knew that it would be a good place to study detective work. I told one of these old guards the other day that I wanted practice and would do detective work for him without pay, but he just looked at me and grinned and I could see from his actions that he would not appreciate good detective work. I caught some men gambling yesterday and told one of the guards, but he called me copper-hearted and said that I was sent to the wrong place. But I am going to study just the same and sure keep an eye on that big crook that assaulted me for I know there is a large reward for him somewhere."

So the boy of strange actions is now known as the "Modern Sherlock Holmes" instead of the "nut."

CHAPTER X

ESCAPES

There have been a few escapes from the walls of the Idaho prison, since my incarceration. Out of those who succeeded in getting over the walls, all but one has been caught and returned to the prison. The one is now a fugitive from justice and likely to be picked up at any time.

It is very difficult to lose yourself once you are a wanted man. The Bertillion and finger print system of this time is hard to get away from and the chances are very much against you from the day the alarm is sounded.

I doubt very much if there was ever a jail or prison built that has not had its escapes, nor do I think there will ever be one. But out of the hundreds of attempts to escape only a very small number really succeed, and then only to be brought back a few weeks later.

I cannot help but feel that the public and press were unfair in their criticism of the prisoners and management of this institution, after the escape of five prisoners during the year of 1923, from this prison. Some of the papers howled as though this was the only prison from which men had escaped and

that the entire institution was teeming with revolt.

They failed to take into consideration that most of the men confined here did not try to escape, nor would they care to leave without being properly released and go out the right way. Nor, did they consider that the warden was working under extreme difficulties, with a small appropriation, trying to build up and repair an old and dilapidated prison that had lost its usefulness twenty years ago.

While making repairs, it was necessary to have the yard filled with lumber, timbers, ladders and tools, all of which are of the greatest aid to men who wish to escape. There was also a guard or two, who were not only incompetent, but disloyal to the warden. They could very easily make opportunities for men to escape, who they knew were anxious to leave, in a most indifferent way without creating suspicion.

After the escape of five men one evening in the early summer of 1923, there was a cry of inefficient management and lack of discipline, the disloyal guards doing much talking to help the matter along. Warden Cuddy, tendered his resignation, and the Governor, very rightly, refused to accept it. During that same year, in some of the most modern penitentiaries in the central and eastern states, there were numerous escapes, with

riots and killings. While at this place not a drop of blood was spilled.

Those who wish to criticize this place for the few escapes it has had in the past ten or fifteen years, should examine the files of Fisherman. He has a report on every escape from every jail and penitentiary, under the American flag for the past thirty years. Much of this data is embodied in a book entitled "Crucibles of Crime," by Joseph F. Fisherman. The author of this book was for many years inspector of federal prisons in the United States, Alaska and other possessions and was consulted by state and municipal authorities on prison escapes.

After reading his reports, it will readily be seen, that no matter how vigilant the prison authorities may be, or how strong a prison may be built, there are bound to be escapes. I will give two cases of escapes culled from Fisherman's files and the reader can draw on his imagination as to how he would have prevented it. The escapes were made without the aid of tools and from two of the most modern penitentiaries in the United States, and where walls were three times as high as the walls around this institution.

During the war, one Robert Fay, was convicted of damaging ships in the shipyards. He was tried and convicted and sentenced to the federal penitentiary at Altanta, Ga. He

was considered to be a dangerous alien and was watched carefully, yet he and his cell mate walked out of the prison to freedom on a forged pass. He forged the name of Mr. Rigsley, the chief engineer, at that time, which instructed them to go into the yard of the institution and make some repairs. They secured ladders, rags and coils of wire and presented their passes to the guards, stating that they had been sent to clean and fix the electric lights in the yard. They spent fifteen or twenty minutes cleaning the lights and after finishing, presented their passes to the tower guard, stating they were also instructed to clean the lights on the grounds near the warden's house, which was farther away.

Mind you, this procedure had been customary for years and they were so cool and indifferent about it, that the guard did not telephone the deputy warden's office to ascertain if the passes were okeh. The pair spent some fifteen minutes cleaning the lights near the warden's house, drifting farther and farther away until like the "Ancient Arabs," they melted away in silence.

The other man went by the name of David Bender, and effected an escape in a cool daring manner from the Maryland penitentiary. He had made several escapes from other prisons and frequent attempts during the year he had been there. Every guard

had been given special orders to watch his every move, for he was considered one of the most desperate men in the prison and would stop at nothing to gain his objective.

The two guards in the shop where he was assigned to work, were detailed to watch his every move, and therefore his escape was made unusually difficult. One day he was working within a few feet of the ever watchful shop guard, when like a meteor he dashed out of the shop, down the stair steps to the walls, grabbing a ladder, which despite their precaution he had been able to obtain and secrete for that purpose; in full view of an armed tower guard, he threw it on the wall and ran to the top, flung the ladder over the other side and climbed down, before the astonished guard realized what he was doing. Bender no doubt, had counted on his daring to take the guard by surprise and give him time to get over the wall without being shot. He had no more than touched the ground over the walls, when a motor truck came rumbling by, he jumped aboard and in his convict suit made dire threats to the driver who speeded up at his command. He threw his uniform, hat and coat in the street to avoid quick detection and passed out of sight while the shop guard was still clamoring for help and the wall guard with his gun still motionless, like a painted soldier against a painted sky.

These and many other escapes go to show that no matter how secure the bolts and bars may be, or how high the walls, or how vigilant the keepers may be, there will always be escapes. So the few escapes from here are nothing out of the ordinary, particularly in view of the conditions as they existed here in 1923.

But some of the public and press overlooked what good warden Cuddy had done. They did not take into consideration that he was laboring under most adverse conditions. They seemed to disregard the great work that he was doing and thought that he should devote his entire time trying to prevent escapes. Ninety-eight per cent of the men who are going along in a quiet and obedient manner were classed along with those who had escaped, as a bunch of hopeless scoundrels, that should receive no more consideration than the jungle beast. All attention at that time centered on the acts of a very few, yet each and all, young and old, felt the criticism.

There has not been a single escape from inside the walls of this institution since Joe Wheeler became warden, nearly three years ago. There have been, however, several attempts, but none succeeded in reaching the walls.

For a while warden Wheeler was at a loss to account for the many attempts to escape.

There was discontent among the prisoners, bars were being cut, master keys were being found and hack saws were finding their way into the prison. Every prisoner was under suspicion, no one was permitted to go near those who were trying to escape, and who had been carefully searched and placed in solitary confinement as a precaution, but in some unknown manner to the writer, hack saws still found their way into the hands of this group of unruly prisoners.

Eventually, the warden became exasperated, and decided to "clean house"; he discharged several guards and employed a new group, whose past record would stand the test of investigation. Of course, there were many loyal guards, whose integrity could not be questioned and they remained. I do not know whether the hack saws were ever explained, or whether the finger of suspicion ever pointed in any one direction. But I do know that most of this year has passed away and there has not been a single attempt to escape, neither has there been a hack saw found within the prison, or a bar cut.

The inmates concluded that some one was furnishing the prisoners in solitary with tools, not that they had any interest in their escape, other than to use them as a means of "framing" the warden. I cannot vouch for this, but that is the consensus of opinion among those who were doing time. Right

here I want to state that it is the most difficult thing in the world to fool a bunch of convicts. Many of them may be out of balance in some way, but they always look with suspicion upon any unusual act or word of a guard, who is not known to be absolutely on the square. Once his integrity and fairness has been proven, ninety-nine out of every one hundred prisoners will like and respect him.

During the many years that I have been here, there have been several wardens and I recall more than one who served in that capacity that were the target of some disgruntled and discharged guards, trying to discredit him, particularly if he happened to be a broad-minded and humane official, who demanded fairness, honesty and loyalty from his subordinates. Warden Wheeler was not unknown to many when he came here. He has been a sheriff and deputy sheriff of Idaho for many years. Among those whose acquaintance goes back for years he is known as "square deal Joe," among those who are his wards, he is known as a just, humane and broad-minded official—one of the best wardens we have ever had.

View of Idaho Penitentiary, 1927. Warden's House, Guard Quarters, and Woman's Ward, in front. For twenty years an old stone hull has stood in the center of the yard. This has been repaired and put in shape, and within its walls there is now being built a modern up-to-date cell house.

Warden Wheeler has made many other improvements, repairing and rebuilding the bake shop, bath house, dining room, library, and kitchen. He has created a dormitory, and is putting up other buildings.

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CHAPTER XI.

PRISON INTRIGUE

There are many plots and counter-plots among the inmates of every jail or penitentiary in the world; these range, according to the location of the prison, from the dope fiend, who is trying to steal a quarter of a grain of morphine from the hospital, a cigarette paper from a careless guard, (in some prisons all smoking is prohibited) a postage stamp to smuggle a letter out, an underground channel to smuggle saws or a gun into the prison, a weird tale of thousands of dollars of ill-gotten gains buried in some place, told to a stupid guard, if he will help him escape.

I have been told by men who have served time in some of the southern prisons, the chief plotting there was to get an extra piece of bread and avoid the cat o' nine tails of the whipping boss, until they could beat the dogs (escape the prison farms where dogs are used to terrify the men).

Then there is always the "stool pigeon" who is plotting to get some privilege by carrying tales, regardless of whether they are true or false. He is an evil that is found everywhere, a diseased mind manufacturing lies and arranging them in sequence so as to

have the appearance of the truth. Once a prisoner is known as a stool pigeon, he is avoided by other inmates as though he were a snake.

In order to carry out any plot, other than stealing the "makings" for a cigarette, or an extra piece of corn pone, which most guards will fail to see, it is imperative that you have help, and that help must come from some one who is either directly or indirectly in touch with the outside world, whether he be a "trusty" that has the confidence of the officials, or some questionable guard who has been able to get a job, owing to the shortage of help.

"Trusties" are usually avoided, for there is a general belief that most of them are "stool pigeons." However, I have personally known several who were absolutely on the level, doing their own time, avoiding all injury to the officials and their fellow-prisoners. Such men as these would never break a rule of the institution, knowingly, neither would they break confidence by repeating any request made of them to the officials. Practically all "stool pigeons" are of a low mentality, this may sound strange, but the records show it to be a fact. Any prisoner convicted of degeneracy, sexual perversion, or who uses dope in any form whatsoever, is looked upon by his fellow-prisoners as a potential "stool pigeon."

Then, over a period of years there is always the certainty, that some incompetent and dishonest guard will be employed. Dishonest employees are found in every vocation and since the salaries paid for these employees is usually very little in comparison with other classes of employment, it is the inevitable result that the prisons get their share of petty crooks on the pay roll.

A crooked guard is more dangerous around a penitentiary than a smouldering fire is to a keg of powder. An incompetent and careless guard may get by for a long time without impairing the morale of the institution or doing anything of serious consequence, but the guard who has larceny in his heart and the cunning to get a job is more to be feared than anything else around a prison. Naturally he would be under no suspicion whatever, otherwise, he would have been discharged. With the confidence of his superior officers, he would be able to get by with most anything without suspicion being aroused, providing he had maintained discretion with those he had come in contact with.

The reader may wonder what a dishonest guard could gain around a prison, unless he had some friend whom he was trying to help. In a large prison, there are frequently men confined, who either have plenty of money, or friends who will supply most any amount,

and through this class of prisoners the crooked guard expects to make his money.

The average prisoner is always wary of a crooked guard, for he knows that such a type would double-cross him just as quickly as he would double-cross the warden. Each one will feel the other out over a period of many months. The prisoner will probably ask for some small favor and since he hasn't the cash in his possession, he will give the guard a letter to mail to a friend, in which he will tell his friend to send him a sum of money to the address at the bottom of the letter. The letter is always written in a way, so if the guard should double-cross him in the beginning and turn the letter over to the warden, there would be nothing more in appearance than a regular letter, which would go through the usual channels. The guard of course, would supply the address on the bottom of the letter, which would in all likelihood be some post office box.

Once the letter had gone through all right and the guard had received the money, he would be told to keep the change, which in all probability would amount to as much as his month's salary. The crooked guard would then be in a position to make easy money. The word would be passed among those who had money, and were considered "solid," that so and so would accommodate him.

Contraband of various kinds would soon find its way into the prison. In most institutions cards and dice are prohibited and I have been told by an inmate who served a term in a southern prison, that a crooked guard would bring a fifty cent deck of cards into the prison and sell them for a dollar and then have his copper-colored "stool pigeons" keep track of the cards and advise him whose possession they were in; then he would go and search the prisoner and take the cards away, of course the prisoner was only too glad to give up the cards as long as he was not reported for breaking the rules of the prison. The guard in turn would pass the deck of cards back to one of his "aids" and they would be sold again for a dollar, this same deck of cards being sold no less than eight times in one day.

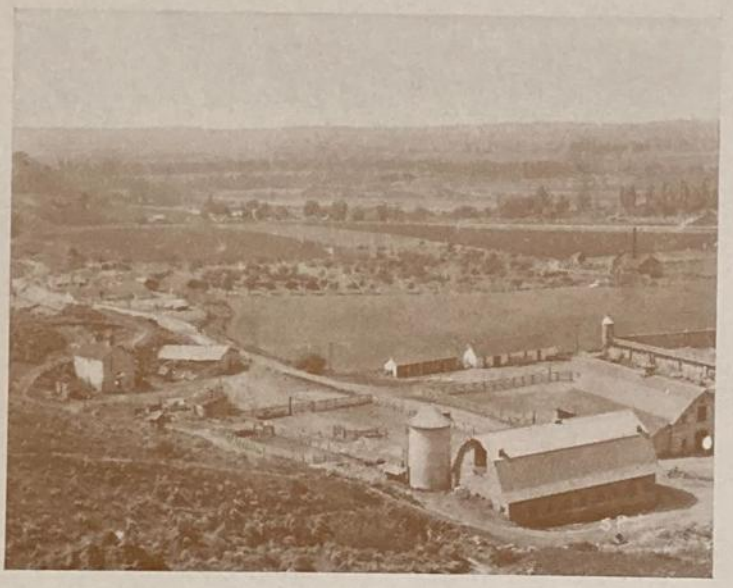
There is a case on record in Wethersfield, Connecticut, where a prisoner was working at night in the power house of the state prison; a guard who was detailed to remain with him at night was so impressed with his story of having several thousand dollars buried only a few miles from the prison, that he volunteered to sneak him out at night and take him in his car to the place where the money was buried and they would split the "swag" and leave the country. Instead of taking the guard direct to where the money was, they stopped by a bootlegger,

who was a friend of the prisoner, and had a few drinks. The prisoner gave his friend the sign and the guard was doped and left peacefully sleeping, where the warden found him the next day, the prisoner leaving for parts unknown.

We all know that every public official is subject to criticism by everybody. The warden of a penitentiary is not only subject to criticism for his every act and word, but he is also criticized for the actions of those who are working with him.

A guard who may have been discharged for incompetency or dishonesty, will invariably start the rumor that the warden is either brutal or slack in his treatment of the prisoners. A prisoner who has some fancied grievance will get word to his relatives that he is not getting a square deal. Where politics have anything to do with the management of the prison, the opposition to those in control of the state politics are anxiously awaiting every rumor that it may be magnified to serve their interest.

It is said that water always finds its level, the same can be said of mankind. Prisoners have their friends among prisoners, and when a man has served a year in prison you can pretty well judge what he is by his associates. But wise is the inmate who remains aloof from any group and travels alone trying to prove himself worthwhile.



View of Prison Grounds Outside the Walls, Showing Some of Warden Wheeler's Improvements, September 1927.

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CHAPTER XII

THE PRISON DUDE

During my incarceration in prison, I recall a very polished gentleman, whom I shall call the "prison dude." He was received on a forgery charge, I believe. He had been raised on what we might term the silver spoon, by wealthy parents, who resided in New York.

Apparently he was well educated; at least he thought he was, having passed through one of the universities and taken a degree in college. Shortly after his arrival, he became known among the inmates as the "educated fool."

He had drifted west, freely spending what money he had until it was gone. A few months later he was in the toils and was sent here to serve an indeterminate sentence. He arrived just about dusk, after the prisoners had been locked in their cells for the night, and, as is often the case with new arrivals, he was greeted with the word "fish." Not being versed in the parlance of prison etiquette he didn't realize that he was being termed another sucker who thought he could beat the game.

The next day after he had been given the privilege of the yard, he asked a guard

for a book and the guard passed him around to the library to make a selection. He saw me working in the flower beds and thinking I was a gardener, from town, employed for that purpose, coming and going when I felt like it and probably thinking it impossible that a convict would know enough to plan and take care of a flower garden, he came over to where I was working and I readily saw that he was looking for information as well as sympathy. From his conversation, I saw at once that he had a very bad impression of all men in prison, and that a penitentiary was something like a zoo, with wild men on exhibition instead of animals. He begun his talk with a lot of "bunk" of what a wonderful garden I had and immediately branched out on the topics of the prison in something like the following:

"This is a terrible place," he said. I am so humiliated; they took all of my good clothes out in the front office, when I came in. They took my suit case and last night I put in such a terrible night, without my night gown and those terrible crooks called me 'fish.' I was so mortified; one of them had such a terrible voice, I know that he must be one of those terrible 'lifers.' I was really frightened, but was very much relieved when I saw they were all locked up, for they might have jumped on me and torn me limb from limb.

"Of course I miss my clothing dreadfully, but I miss my wrist watch and night gown more so. I would like for you to tell them in the front office that I want my wrist watch and night gown. I have been well raised and I think they are treating me real mean when they class me among this bunch of regular crooks."

I interrupted him long enough to inform him that he had been received here as a prisoner and that all of his belongings would be returned to him in due time, such as tooth brush, hair brush, comb and night gown and that his clothing would be returned to him on his release. "When you have been assigned to a building and show that you are going to obey the rules and try and get along you will probably be permitted to have your wrist watch. Those things were taken from you until you get settled and are able to look after yourself. However, such matters as this you will have to take up with Mr. Cribbins, the Chief Clerk; he looks after all the property of prisoners, the Bertillion and identification work and is a good square officer, who will always do the right thing by everyone."

"Mr. Gardner," he said. "You know that I am highly educated and that I am much better than all of these criminals and they won't like me for that, so I will have to watch my steps when I get near these mean

crooks, but I am going down in the yard in a few minutes and look for a 'life timer.' I don't suppose that I will have any trouble finding one, but do they dress or look any different from the other crooks?"

"Well," I said, "a 'life timer' ordinarily walks on two legs, the same as a orangoutang and belongs to the species they call man. He talks, he laughs, he feels and thinks, he has about the same good and bad points that you or any other similar animal has."

"Oh, they could not be!" he replied. "For me and my ancestors have always been the best. None of my ancestors were ever sent to prison for even a day."

Just then a smooth-faced boy, about twenty years of age passed down the path leading to the library. He was a very innocent looking chap and was seemingly much younger than he really was.

"That just reminds me," he said. "A lady told me before I came here, and I think she was right, that all boys like that should be segregated from the older prisoners."

I told him that would be an excellent idea, for it would save a lot of ignorant laborers sent here from learning mischief from some of these shrewd young crooks, who had graduated from the Reform School, having been there two or three times; that they knew every angle of the crooked game and were liable to wise up some of the old nesters

that lived in the jungles and were so green the barber had to use a special clipper to get the alfalfa out of their whiskers.

"Some of these nice boys are liable to lead these old farmers astray and put ideas into their heads as to how they can make a dollar without following the plow and dragging their whiskers through the alfalfa.

"That boy you just saw pass can put his hand in every pocket you have in a few seconds and you will never know anything about it unless he tells you. He knew all about crime before he came here. If you get your wrist watch, you had best look out, for that boy can steal it off your wrist and you will never get wise to where it went. He is known as the prince of pickpockets and that is one reason why your watch was held in the front office, so that you might get settled and know how to take care of yourself without an extra guard having to watch you all the time.

"There is another thing, Mr. Wise Guy," I told him. "You have stated that none of your ancestors were ever locked up. Did you ever stop to think that every generation you go back, your ancestors double? You don't go very far until you find that you are a descendent from millions of ancestors. Now you have one father and one mother, two grandfathers and two grandmothers, four great-grandfathers and four great-

grandmothers. So each step back you go they double. To prove this commence with your father and mother which is two, and multiply and keep on multiplying by two for twenty times and you will find by going back twenty generations they run into the millions. That will carry you back over a period of about five hundred years. During those twenty generations some of the blackest pages of history were written. Those were the dark centuries, with blood running in rivers. The cloud of superstition did not sink behind the horizon of civilization until the dawn of the present century. Revenge, hatred, cruelty and ignorance engulfed the world. Not until a few decades ago did the human race become weary of bloodshed, and each generation since we have been pulling farther and farther away from the grosser cruelties of a rougher humanity.

"During the centuries, in which twenty generations of your ancestors lived, most of the homes of Europe, had loved ones burned at the stake through greed, fanaticism or politics. Under Henry VIII of England, 70,000 executions took place. Very often the innocent suffered with the guilty. Wives and children perished with their husbands. Often hundreds would be slain for the offense of one. Sheriffs were authorized to burn witches without trial. Self-appointed leaders put their fellow men to death for

no other purpose than to confiscate their property. There were few, indeed, in prison, for nearly all suffered the death penalty.

"During those five centuries there were one hundred and fifty crimes in France and England, punishable by death. For stealing a loaf of bread to feed your hungry babies you would be put to death. Pickpockets were often burned in oil, while other pickpockets were relieving the spectators of their purses. During the eighteenth century, in France, when prisons were wanted for other purposes, a squad of soldiers would be sent to empty the prison. Instead of turning the prisoners at liberty, they would be slaughtered. This happened many times in France, during that century.

"On the 14th day of September 1789 a committee of the assembly was appointed to empty a certain prison in France, occupied by women. Upon the arrival of the committee, the poor creatures confined there were overjoyed at the prospects of liberty, all the more so for a few had been set free recently. The first woman appearing before the Assembly, who were sitting as a regular Court of Justice, had had the letter 'V' burned into her arm years before, which was the telltale brand of the thief. She like many others had previously been arrested for stealing bread to feed her hungry children, and marked with the letter 'V' so that she

would be known as a thief in the future. This woman with 33 others was taken into the yard, where a squad of cutthroats were detailed for the purpose, and massacred.

"Now, Mr. Wise Guy, isn't it possible, out of all your ancestors, living through all those cruel centuries, that some of them did steal a ham or a loaf of bread and were sent to prison, or were put to death in one of the many heartless ways that lives were taken? You may not be aware of it, but there were over forty ways of inflicting the death penalty in those days. Burning, beheading, dragging, quartering, breaking on the wheel, crucifixion, strangulation, suffocation, crushing, and being thrown to wild beasts, are a few of the brutal methods employed in execution.

"Nero burned the early Christian to light the streets of Rome. In China, faithless wives were thrown to elephants to be trampled to death and men were cast into dens of serpents.

"Just one hundred and fifty years ago, under Louis XV, one of the most horrible executions on earth took place. A foolish boy, of the name of Damiens, slightly scratched one of the Royalists, with a small knife. He was tied to an iron pillory, to prevent his escape. A few days later it was suggested that he be made to suffer the most terrible punishment that could be inflicted;

his flesh was carved in a number of places and vinegar poured into the open wounds; his hands were slowly burned off. After hours of this torture, his feet were made fast to a whiffletree and hitched to a pair of horses to be dragged through the streets that all might see. His sinews were so tough that he was drawn for an hour and a half over the stone streets before life became extinct. A woman spectator, the wife of a noted politician, was viewing the punishment of the condemned, but her only remark on the tragedy, was to exclaim: 'Ah! the poor horses,' when they were lashed by the driver as they pulled the lower limbs from the prisoner's body. Either that woman or the victim may have been one of your ancestors. Who can tell?

"Crucifixion was practiced by Darius, who on one occasion crucified 2000 Assyrians, while at another time 3000 Babylonians were put to death on the cross, some of them being rolled down a hill in a barrel, with iron spikes driven through from the outside, as a means of torturing the victim. Their eyelids were cut off so that the eye might be exposed to the sun.

"These things that I tell you may not interest you, young man, perhaps you are not aware that such cruelties ever existed. You should be thankful that you are living in an enlightened age, where you can serve your

sentence in a humane prison as we have today, while many of your proud ancestors went to the stake or were thrown to wild beasts for a much lesser crime than forgery.

"They say that a man never gets too wise to learn, and even with your university education, you have, perhaps, learned something from a man that hasn't seen the inside of a school house since he was thirteen years old, and worse yet, a 'life timer' in the penitentiary. Good day, Mr. Dude, I feel sorry that you have been deprived of your wrist watch."

CHAPTER XIII.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF PRISONERS

Various books have been published and many articles written describing the types of humanity that make up the so-called criminal class, each endeavoring to set forth peculiar characteristics by which a criminal may be known. Most of these books were written to sell to a public who knew just as much about criminals as a whole as the author.

After twelve years in daily contact with men convicted for every crime on the statute books of Idaho, it is my honest conviction that there is no such thing as a "criminal class." I dare say there are few indeed, who have reached the prime of life, who have not violated some statutory law of some commonwealth. All mankind in its early ancestry was adverse to restrictions governing their liberty and actions. The Ten Commandments of two thousand years ago, have multiplied into ten thousand commandments of "thou shalt nots," within the last few centuries.

Were it possible, through some trick of magic, to transport a thousand convicts from any penitentiary in the United States into a large church, theater, football game, political gathering or any other large crowd,

it is doubtful if the greatest criminologist in the world could identify a single individual as belonging to a criminal type, it being borne in mind that the convicts are well dressed and not laboring under some handicap. You can pass through any prison in the country and you will see men of the same appearance that you will pass on your way to your home or office.

There are men in prisons today, who will steal your pocketbook and give it to a washwoman, who is trying to support a house full of children, before they are three blocks away. There are others who will burglarize your home for valuables and give them away to some loved one before the night is over. As a matter of record many crimes are committed for the sake of a wife, father, mother, sweetheart or some other loved one that the criminal hopes to better their worldly welfare.

Of course, the man who goes forth to rob or steal does not take into consideration that ultimately he will bring more grief to those loved ones by his commission of the crime, than they would suffer in a lifetime by the things they would be deprived of had he depended on his daily wages to gain that end. He does not see beyond the present, when there is bound to be a reckoning, when he must pay a hundredfold for his every act of wrong doing.

There is no question but what poverty is the directing hand of many criminals. Ignorance and poverty erase the names of more men from the rolls of citizenship than all other causes in the world combined. I hold no brief for the modern bandit, who ruthlessly follows nefarious ways and preys upon his fellow man. I am speaking of the great mass of mankind who has at some time had a number.

Did you ever consider what became of the hundreds of thousands of men released from all the prisons in the course of ten or twenty years? We know that the large percentage did not return to prison. Then what became of them? You may go to any city in the world today with a population of ten thousand inhabitants and there search the city directory for the names of former convicts. I dare say you will find only a few with the same name and identification that enlarge the records of some distant prison. But if you could search into the past of every good citizen in your community, if you could tear the mask of a few years from the respected family down the street you might find the father or son had at one time been classed as a criminal. Thousands of men have bid goodbye to their loved ones and gone to another clime to "come back" and many have made good. There are ex-convicts today holding responsible jobs in the affairs of all walks of life.

Many have come to the top after being down to the very lowest rung of the ladder. The mayor of one of the larger cities of the United States, at this writing, was a convict less than twenty-five years ago, and he has been mayor now for almost ten years.

While there is much tragedy in all prisons, there are many happenings that turn into comedy. I have in mind a chap who came to this prison a few years ago for stealing a horse. He and his brother had homesteaded on a dry land farm, they had been struggling along for a few years trying to make ends meet, with no success. Finally their only horse died and they were without means or credit to obtain another one. The younger brother drifted over into another county and appropriated a horse unknown to its owner. He had not been here many weeks until he scrawled out a few words to his brother and advised him to steal a horse and come on down, that this place beat dry farming all to h - - -.

There was another prisoner here a few years ago, whose actions suggested anything but intelligence. Eventually he became so bad he was transferred to the asylum at Blackfoot. It was not long after his transfer until his former cell mate received a rather lucid letter from him in which he did not hesitate to state that the majority of the inmates of the asylum were a great deal

smarter than those he had left at the penitentiary. So you may see that we have occasion to laugh, even if it is at our own expense.

CHAPTER XIV.

THINGS TWELVE YEARS HAVE TAUGHT

Many people have written me letters and I wish that I could reproduce them here, but it would take too much space, and yet I would like to show there are a great many people outside of prison who are thoughtful of those who are inside. Some of these letters have some wonderful things in them, each one breathing with a kindness and spirit to help a man when he is up against it, and they show me more and more that deep down inside the human race there is a disposition to give every man a show.

It is not necessary to say these letters are a treasure to a man imprisoned for the term of his natural life behind gray walls. They bring new hope in human kind and speak of a spirit of friendship in the world that keeps alive the desire in the heart of a man to make good.

Hundreds of letters have come to me from men and women in all walks of life; business men, officers of the law, and it goes to show me that there are countless good people, who without any chance for personal gain or earthly reward will do all they can to help a man, who is down and trying to rise and lift himself up and stand square on his feet once more.

After all the human race is one great family, coming from where no man knows and journeying to what destination none can tell except as they feel some sort of faith or hope within them. We are all passengers on the same train and it is easier, when we learn how, to smile than to frown, it is better to help than to harm. If I, myself, should ever be so fortunate as to again enter the world, and stand once more among free men, I think I should understand life as an entirely different thing to that which I thought it twelve years ago when I became a part of the dim shadows behind these gray stone walls.

This I have learned to believe, that the very men I once held in awe—officials who uphold and enforce the law—as a rule would be the first to give a man a helping hand, and the first thing that I would do were I free, knowing the cloud that lies over me, should I, sometime light in a distant city, where the record of the years are unknown, would be to inform the chief of police of my past confinement and tell him of my intentions to go square.

Then, if later some petty larceny crook should happen along, who I should be so unfortunate as to have known in prison and recognize me and try to bleed me for hush money, which has occurred in many cases, I could tell him to go jump in the lake. He would not be able to tell anything which I,

myself, had not already told, and his very efforts to put me in bad, I believe, would justify the faith I would hope by frankness to establish in the hearts of my fellow man.

It seems to me that most of the trouble in this world is because people do not understand each other and the motives in each others' hearts.

Like every prisoner, perhaps, who has ever been confined behind stone walls, I myself dream always of a day that may come when I might have a chance to once more be a man and citizen. This is the hope that does not die in a man's heart, and even to one who hears the the doors slammed behind him and his sentence is "for the rest of his natural life," there is still somewhere, deep down in him the hope that if he does the best he can and proves that he is trying to do the best that he can he will finally be granted a few years at least of freedom before he dies. That hope is naturally in my heart. I say so frankly, because in all this story I have simply desired to tell things as they are, and I do not want to be misunderstood in anything. But I want to say that I will never play the hypocrite to get free. If I cannot win the confidence and respect of those around me while I am in prison by playing square I could not win it by pretending something that was not true.

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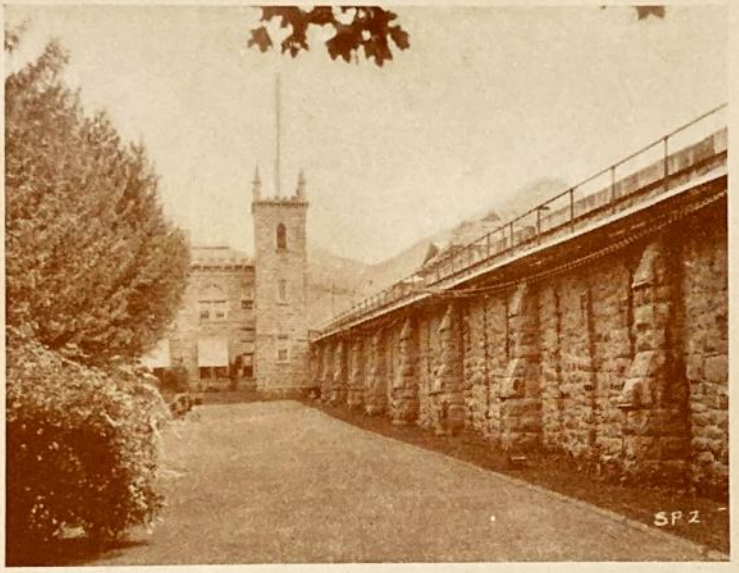

Outside the gray walls September 1927.

Peering into the gloom of long winter nights, thinking in the solitude of my cell during gray, dull days—facing on every side the grim rock walls that surround me and which have surrounded me for twelve years, I have seen things I never saw before and I have learned things that a few years ago I could not have believed.

But now I know there is a squareness in human beings, whose hearts and hands are guided by the same great unseen divine power that controls the universe and moves with love the souls of men.

Sometimes I wonder which is harder, never to have fallen into the depths and to have lived always on the sunlit slopes of the mountain side, or to have plunged deep, deep into the abyss, and then, in spite of hell, in spite of all doubts and fear and dread, to climb back up and up and up.

In closing this chapter, may I repeat, this book is not written as a literary masterpiece, it has made no pretensions at literary excellence. I have simply tried to tell what a man sees, what he feels and what he faces when prison doors swing shut behind him.

CHAPTER XV.

STUDY OF THE PSYCHIC

"Are there voices in the valley,
Lying near the heavenly gate?
When it opens, do the harp-strings
Touched within reverberate?
When, like shooting stars, the angels
To your couch at nightfall go,
Are their swift wings heard to rustle:
Tell me! for you know."

During my confinement in this prison I have read a great deal; studying history, geology and astronomy. In 1922 I became interested in the study of psychology, reviewing many books on this subject as well as theosophy.

I was eager to learn why mankind was created; why prisons were built. For what purpose was the earth created, and what unseen power controlled all the millions of stars in the universe. Where are the central courts of heaven? Is man's life on earth only a dream; are all the perplexities, all the mysteries, all the secrets, influence of hidden power? Why all these dangers that shadow our footsteps if life is not a dream? When and how will man awaken? There must be an invisible power whose presence fills all the universe. The planets could not move like clock-work without a master mind, and it must be Him who reaches out after the divine in response to the psychic long-

ings within the human heart, for that which is longed for, or hoped for, must exist somewhere.

For three years I gave all my spare time to this great study. I was impressed very much with the knowledge these studies conveyed; that the air all about us is crowded with features and forms, vibrating out from millions of minds and bodies all unseen, but just as real as the messages sent and received by radio.

From some of the other authorities, I learned that when an individual is under great stress of feeling the mind can live for what seems a long time, and thoughts enough to fill chapters of a book, can pass through the brain in details that are minute and complicated all in one second of time, and that the function of the brain in dreams will let long trains of ideas occupy the mind in a minute. Those who are dreaming, or in a condition where they feel death is close at hand have the same power of rapid thinking. Curtains of the past are raised and events pass in review before the mind with inconceivable speed.

The reverie or trance state works very much the same way, when one is pinned beneath a burning car and realizes that death is only a few moments away, with his mind fully awake and alert he will see all of his past in a flash. So every human must have somewhere in his inner soul the same record

reel; for it is a known fact that we are all capable of dreaming great trains of ideas during sleep, or in a state bordering on sleep.

In the summer of 1925, while seated alone in the little machine shop, thinking seriously where I could get books that would throw more light on the subject in which I had become interested, some books, some line of studies that would give me information in different angles where I could see into the subject more clearly, my mind went back over the yesterday years, the lids of my eyes were drooping and I was drowsy. Just then, some one entered and handed me a three-paged typewritten letter.

"The throbbing, pulsing mind
Imprints its fleeting thoughts
Upon the wireless air
And every human brain
That bears the message home
A transient station is."

I unfolded the typewritten pages and read: "Coming to you is a vast fund of information, intellectual wealth that will unroll before you the gigantic domain of creation. You will see the dimmed past, the black void, the breath of light, the awakening of all powerful thought all molded into the living present. You'll see the Master Mind that moves the universe, worlds, sun, stars, earth and mankind. Your mind will be carried to all parts of the heavens, your subconscious or other mind is your eternal part of life, it will be met and talked to.

"Your past and all its disappointments will be forgotten. The future will dawn bright and big. All the knowledge you will need you will have when you receive the full set of textbooks by Shaftesbury, the world's greatest living teacher. He plunges you far in advance of the unusual studies of psychology. He will train you. He will save you."

Just then I was disturbed by a noise outside of the shop. I raised my heavy eyelids and noticed the letter I had been reading had disappeared; my hands were empty; I had been asleep, and what I had read was only a dream, but it was seemingly real.

A few days thereafter I received the advance foundation copy of Shaftesbury's works, and it was just what I had seen in the dream. I had never heard of his books before, but I learned later that a friend of mine, living thousands of miles away, had, on the very day of my strange dream, directed that the Shaftesbury books be forwarded to me. Later on I received the full set and found them to be just what the letter of my dreams said they would be.

"Sculptors of life are we, as we stand,
With our lives uncarved before us;
Waiting the hour when at God's command,
Our life dream passes o'er us.
Let us carve it then on the yielding stone,
With many a sharp incision;
Its heavenly beauty shall be our own—
Our lives, that angels vision."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE REVERIE

"On the bald bleak skull of the desert
I will lie and dream of the past time,
Aeons of thought away;
And through the jungle of memory,
Loosen my fancy to play."

One evening not long ago, I was stretched on my work bench in the little machine shop, after a day of weary toil taking a little rest before turning in for the night. My physical being was tired and I soon drifted into a light slumber while my mind wandered into the realms of what we may term a dream.

I drifted back to the cradle where I was rocked many years ago; then skimming the high spots of my past career, up and out into the living, breathing world of today. I was a babe toddling across the floor endeavoring to walk, or puttering around in the shadows of a pretty country cottage, with a dooryard bright with roses and other flowers climbing over the porch. I grew into ruddy-faced youngster and spent much time swinging on the yard gate in the rear of the house while watching a range of distant mountains which set far away toward the western horizon. I was wondering what lay beyond those mighty peaks.

At 14 years of age I'm drifting across the world. I am alone in the barren deserts,

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The Author at the Age of 14 Years.

down through old Mexico, South America, then back to the States and on to Canada and Alaska; back again to San Francisco and to sea. A trip around the world by way of Cape Horn, sometimes working my way and sometimes as a stowaway.

For two years I was on a sailing vessel, plying the waters of the seven seas. Once I was shipwrecked in the South Pacific, my life being saved by a miracle. When America became involved in war with Spain, I returned to the States at once and tried to enlist. I was told that I was too young and was turned down. Back to the sea again I went; through the West Indies, on into the Mediterranean and Black Seas, delivering a cargo to a Russian port. Thence, through the Suez Canal, around to Bombay and Calcutta and on to Australia for a cargo destined for Hongkong where the anchor was made fast.

The Boxer rebellion was on and troops from all civilized nations were answering the call to put down the uprising. For months as an American citizen I mingled with the friendly troops on the great deserts of China. Then on to London, where I learn of the rebellion in the Philippines against the American government. I return to the States once more and going into the interior to a small post, offer my services to the country of my birth; as I am closely ap-

proaching the age to make enlistment possible, I am accepted.

I am sent to Fort Presidio and soon thereafter to Manila. My regiment is sent to the firing line, in the hotbeds of insurrection. Two years in the Islands, my regiment is ordered home, my term of enlistment expires and I am discharged on American soil.

Next I am mining and prospecting, over the waste lands of the great Southwest into Old Mexico, I take a tramp steamer from there to Alaska only to return to the States immediately. The sea is calling, I'm off for South Africa for a year and back by way of Australia.

I am back prospecting again and wandering on the edge of a desert without water; my tongue is swollen; my throat is parched. At the base of a lonely mountain I am working my way through the small underbrush. I slip and fall, landing in a brook, which perhaps, would not have been discovered otherwise. Raising my dizzy head I drink the clear sparkling water until my blood begins to cool. Taking hold of the grass at the edge of the pool, I pull myself to the bank, then turning and looking down into the pool of clear blue water I see not my image mirrored there, but a city of gold. With a cry of sudden surprise I turn around to discover from whence the mirage comes. But I am alone at the foot of a lofty mountain standing like

a silent sentinel guarding the hidden treasure of the desert.

I had often seen mirages of cities and lakes on the barren wind-swept deserts, but never before a city of gold. The mirage I had seen was the reflection from above the mountain down into the brook. So this city of gold must lie just the other side, throwing the reflection into the heavens and from there the picture appeared on the surface of this brook. I will climb over this mountain and down into the riches beyond.

I looked at my watch. It was three o'clock in the afternoon as I started up the wall of the mountain. Darkness came on and I stopped to rest before the final climb. The moon had arisen; I looked at my watch; it was nine o'clock in the evening. I got up and started to continue my journey. I went only a few steps and found my passage cut off by a deep and narrow canyon. I stopped and peered down into its depth by the light of the moon. I could see hundreds of feet down sheer walls but could not see the bottom. It was a gap made in the earth, perhaps, by some earthquake millions of years ago. From bank to bank at the top is perhaps twenty-five feet. Finding a long pole and placing one end where I stood, I let the other end drop to the opposite bank, making a temporary bridge. When about half over the canyon the pole snapped in the center

and down, down, down into the blackest depths I plunged. Before I hit the bottom I became unconscious. I do not know how long I lay there before I came to. I found my life had been spared by falling on a thick straw mattress. I saw small streaks of sunlight penetrating down into the narrow depths. I have lain here all night, I thought, the sun is up now, but to my surprise and horror I am surrounded by a small cold iron bound cell.

Now I see the squalid old courthouse, a courtroom filled with strangers. I am accused of murder. How can it be? This must be a dream. I arose and turning around looked into the sea of strange faces. Yes, it is real. It is a courtroom and I am being tried for my life. But how could I be implicated in that midnight assassination, while at that hour I lay unconscious in the black depths of an unknown canyon?

Now a man is reading something from a paper. I am dazed when I hear my name called. I am to be banished forever. I was to be blindfolded and taken to a far away foreboding land from which no one had ever returned. I am led from the courtroom and blindfolded. At last we arrive in a new country and the blinds are removed from my eyes. I find that we are in a cold desert. "Here," they said, "we will leave you alone, and here you will always remain. This is the

land from which no one has ever escaped." Then pointing to the west they said, "In that direction the land rises, and slopes, plains, steppes, and plateaus, undulating and varying in form, until they are lost above the clouds. On the summit farthest away stands a mountain, and just over it is a new world."

This is September 1915 and I am left alone to become dead and forgotten for all time to come. For two years I wander about this bleak and desolate land, which defies civilization. I find a gate through which I pass into fields and farms dotted with huts and a tribe of stupid humanity which speaks a strange tongue. After three years among them, I find the second gate, leading toward the new world. I come into a country where there are gardens and orchards and the people appear more intelligent than the savages that I have just left. I spend two years with them and find the third gate, leading on in the direction of the new world. I pass into a country where there are flowers and vines, lakes, fountains and scenery greet my eyes and gladden my heart.

After three years studying this beautiful country, I sit alone in a park, thinking just when and where I will find another gate leading to the new world.

"With a slow and noiseless footstep
Comes that messenger divine,
Takes the vacant chair beside me,
Lays her gentle hand in mine;
And she sits and gazes at me
With those deep and tender eyes,
Like the stars, so still and saint-like,
Looking downward from the skies."

Two more years I spend among friendly hearts. While out for a stroll one day, I met a man, whom it seemed at sight that I had known always. His appearance impressed me very much. "A beautiful place," I said. "Yes," he answered. "But I can show you and guide you to the gate that opens into the shadows of the New World."

It was late in the evening in September 1927. The air was balmy with a touch of autumn in its breath. The moon was hanging low in the eastern sky with its mellow light glistening on the orchards and flowers beside our path. Together we wandered down one of nature's paths in a beautiful piece of woodland, lingering here and there to view the splendor of the glorious scenery that nature unfolded before us. Beyond a distant glade we caught a glimpse of a crystal lake that mirrored the stars of far-off worlds, while night birds glided through the foliage in search of their loved ones.

"It is a rare night," said my friend. "I am a lover of nature. I like to wander through the forests, or in the gardens surrounded by a lawn which always beckons to you with a friendly view. I like to linger

in the moonlight and starlight when all the world is wrapped in slumber. Heaven comes nearer earth, and peace falls like a benediction on my soul, an all-pervading presence fills all space, and deep and sweet beyond expression is the calm that God fills my soul with. The existence of my soul becomes a reality, a being apart from myself. At these times a flower is a smile upon the cheek of nature, the fragrance of the rose is the perfume that carries the message of 'Peace on earth and good will to men.'"

Throughout the night we strolled through the wonderland; as we passed into its depths the scenery magnified its beauty, carving marvelous pictures as the shadow of the moon changed from east to west.

At dawn we are at the foot of a mountain, with the morning sunlight kissing her majestic peak, with beauty radiating to the distant hills across the valleys. A smooth and even slope, with flowers and a well-nourished lawn led to its graceful crown, which was now turning to gold and amber in the morning sky.

I paused and let my eyes drink in the beautiful scenery before me. My companion lifted his arms and said:

"I have guided you through the moonlight and the fourth gate we have passed. You are now standing at the foot of nature's

monument, and just over the other side is the New World."

"You have the wanderlust," I said to my companion. "Please tell me who you are and where you live."

"I am the best friend you ever had," he said. "The best you will ever have. I have guided you all through life and will stay with you through eternity. When a youth, you were a wanderer, lost on the great deserts of southern Arizona. I brought you out when the ship you were on foundered in the south seas. Your ship went down and you, a boy alone on a raft, were threatened by angry waters. I guided you over rolling billows, and at last directed you to the shores of an island.

"I was with you in the jungles of the Philippines and dozens of times snatched you from the jaws of death. When you were reeling from fever and death seemed very near, your company received orders to break the enemy's resistance. It was I, that gave you the strength to raise up and go forward with your company, breaking the enemy's stronghold and gaining victory and honor for yourself, your country and your flag.

"A few days later, while on outpost duty, cut off and surrounded by the savage enemy, your capture and a cruel death seemed certain. It was I, who aided you to break

through the enemy and reach the American troops in safety.

"After two years of guarding your life in those malaria-infected jungles, I returned you safely to your native soil. For years I have been trying to get you to recognize me as your own true friend, for I am your worthy self within your other self."

He then pointed to the sky above the mountains, where two silver-lined clouds were drifting side by side.

"I saw two clouds at morning,
Tinged by the rising sun,
And in the dawn they floated on,
And mingled into one;
I thought that morning cloud was blessed,
It moved so sweetly to the west."

I turned to address my companion, who had been standing by me, but he had disappeared. I was alone before the foot stool of Divinity. I again raised my eyes towards heaven, but the clouds were gone—on over and down into the New World beyond. I lay down on the lawn at the foot of God's masterpiece and wondered as to what was in the valley beyond. If I were only there, I thought, I could live in marble palaces surrounded with green trees. I would sit beneath the wandering vines and listen to the songs of birds, or stroll beneath the orange trees where the music of murmuring fountains spraying the roses with crystal waters soothed me into a sleep.

Next my brain is disturbed by rumbling echoes of distant thunder. I am lifted by an unseen power; swiftly I am wafted across the heavens and back to earth, bounding across fields, forests and valleys, with the speed of thought, over the walls into the shop and standing by the work bench viewing an old, withered body, pale and hovering in the dim shadows of death. It is the form of myself, awake, and back to the stern realities of a grim life convict behind gray walls.

The golden vision had evaporated like a will-o'-the-wisp. Dark clouds had engulfed me. I was still just a number in the tombs of the living dead, one of the beings that make up the port of missing men. I had been asleep only a few minutes. Yet, in those moments I had lived ages, reviewing my life, traveling over land and across the seas, around the world. Starting in God's smiling wonderland and traversing all the realms of beauty. To me that was a wondrous place that I had just left. Why did I come back and slip into this old shell of clay that is condemned to a hopeless existence behind cold walls.

I am alone, the shop is as still as the chambers of death. A feeling of horror sweeps through my body. An empty void is before me—a black gulf, its farthest brink stretching back into the centuries torn from the page of time. Coming from its depths

I hear groans and pleadings for mercy from the millions of unfortunates long dead. I see pages of history being written with blood. Stretching out over the gulf is a long line of men and women, down on their knees, their eyes raised heavenward. Blood is trickling from their backs. I watch the cruelties inflicted upon these victims—the shuddering brutalities, the prejudices, the atrocity of intrenched injustice. Womanhood, staggering under burdens too heavy to be borne, struck down and massacred for stealing a loaf of bread. Children in all their agony being thrown to wild beasts, while their fathers are burning at the stake. I hear wails of little children as they are forced to watch father and mother stripped of their clothing, placed on the rack and pulled limb from limb.

I see the dreadful reign of the Spanish Inquisition, inflicting cruelties upon their victims. My heart aches at the clipping of ears, and the chopping of hands and feet, the burning with irons of the condemned criminals before death.

The Chinese method of blood vengeance—binding and dropping their victims into dens of serpents, boiling or burying alive, innocent women and children dragged from their homes and nailed to the cross, while others are left broken on the wheel, or to starve

in a den of huge rats which will eventually tear the flesh from the body.

The history of Turkish and Egyptian tyrants unfolds before me—the black Czars of Russia and all Europe with its fiendish tortures and blood curdling events are there. There is no mercy or shame in the eighteenth century.

A brighter light dawns over the land and the greater nations move the chambers of torture behind closed doors, while their victims cry aloud to heaven for mercy.

Then comes England with its shocking prison system, with its red record of horrors, its hidden cesspools of depravity and soul-crushing deeds. Behind drab stone walls, away from the light of day in the bleak gloom of a dungeon, the poor defenseless mortals shriek out their agonies alone and unheard until borne away by death, their souls drifting on to plead for the millions yet unborn.

Not until the dawn of the present century did the white-winged dove of reformation and humanity stretch its pinions above the land and give birth to the modern prisons of today.

Now the gulf that spans the cruel centuries has closed and vanished through the dim passage of time. I see a lone man, a wanderer upon the face of the earth; he appears weak and wanting. He totters and

reels as he enters dark forests. There is a squalid old courthouse, a courtroom filled with strangers and he is being tried for murder.

He is led from the courtroom with a life sentence hanging over his bowed head. Now he is in the tombs and is soon framed by a prison rat into solitary confinement. He comes out of solitary fighting against great odds and struggling against long weary years that carve furrows in his brow. Now he is alone with his head in his hands, his hair is streaked with gray and he wonders why God has bid him suffer all of this. Then a benign hand stretches forth and the voice of an angel says, "You are mine, I have been with you and helped resurrect your life and will stay with you to the end of time."

I glance at the calendar on the wall, it is September 1927. Twelve years ago, I was weak. I slipped and fell. Twelve years ago I was too weak to resist temptation, too weak to resist environment. A just comparison would be of the man who tried to swim upstream. No man, however brave or strong could swim against the stream, unless he had at first learned to swim. My fault lay in the fact that I could not swim.

During these twelve long withering years, I have worked hard, studied, learned and tried to develop all that is good and genuine. This is a foreboding atmosphere, against the

current of grayness and monotony of life; unsightly and sordid surroundings with ceaseless toil, tending to burn the senses and cloud the mind and oppress the spirit, thus destroying pride, idols, ambition and hope.

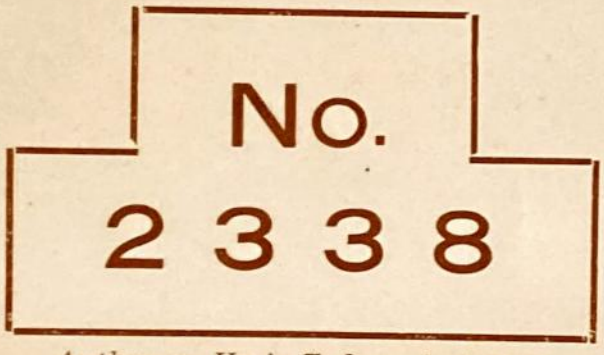
I would like to think that I have struggled successfully against the stream. That, at last I have learned to swim up and over into the New World beyond grim walls.

"He who has yearned so long to go
Over the lofty mountains—
He whose visions and fond hopes grow
Dim, with the years that so restless flow—
Oh, why, dost thou hither here
Over the lofty mountains
Surely it must be better there
Brighter the view and freer the air."

I thank you.

Southern Idaho
College of Education
Albion, Idaho

The Author as a Soldier during the Philippine Insurrection.



Author as He is Today—just 2338

"Say not good-night,
But in some brighter clime
Bid me good-morning."

The End